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TALES OF THE HEART.

BY

MRS. OPIE.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

"There is no killing like that which kills the heart."
SHAKSPEARE.

VOL. II.

London:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1820.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe-lane.

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TALES OF THE HEART.

THE TWO SONS.

In a populous village on the borders of Westmorland lived an exciseman of the name of Douglas. He was descended from an old Scotch family which had gradually become poorer and poorer from generation to generation, till its representatives sunk into utter obscurity; and the father of him of whom I am writing thought himself very fortunate in procuring the place of exciseman, and in being allowed to resign it when he grew old to his son. This son sunk himself still lower in society, by marrying beneath him; and every

spark of ambition seemed extinguished in his bosom, till he became the father of two boys, and then he suddenly recollected that he heard his father say, the name of Douglas was a good name; he therefore resolved to give his sons an education. But our exciseman inherited the indolence and wasteful habits of his progenitors, and the advantages bestowed by a village schoolmaster were all he was able to give his children. Still, such as they were, the younger son made himself master of all the learning offered to him; while the other son, though three years his senior, was as ignorant when he left school as he was when he entered it.

It is natural to conclude therefore, that the parents would have been prouder and fonder of Ronald Douglas than of his elder brother; but it was not so; on the contrary, the petted and spoiled child was the dull, idle, unamiable boy; and he

who was the pride of his master, and the favourite of the village, was treated at home with even brutal severity; while, if his warm heart was not chilled into apathy, his manners were rendered cold and reserved, and his temper apparently sullen.

The elder boy, John, was strikingly handsome; and so had Ronald been, but the small-pox injured the excessive beauty of his skin, and with his fine complexion vanished most of his mother's love. John, therefore, remained without competitor in her good opinion and admiration. To her the fair florid cheek, the bright unmeaning eyes, of John, were the perfection of loveliness, while she and her husband both mistook his pertness for wit, and thought his not being able to learn was to be attributed to his excessive quickness and cleverness. To their undiscriminating eye, Ronald's expressive countenance possessed no beauty; and his

look of mild intelligence said nothing to their hearts, while they persisted to believe that he got forward in the school merely by dint of plodding, and that his excellence was as much a proof of stupidity as John's ignorance was of talent.

This is a very common mistake; and often do parents attribute to superior quickness in their children, that incapacity to learn by which they are nevertheless secretly annoyed.

Poor Ronald was so often told that he was ugly, stupid, and disagreeable, that he at last believed it: the consequence was, that at fifteen his spirits were depressed, his abilities checked, his hopes gone, and a sort of early blight seemed to have come over his heart. As he was now old enough to work for his living, he was soon informed by his father that he must choose a trade. He would have liked to have been a schoolmaster, for he loved

books and loved children; but he found that he was expected to choose a mechanical employment, and he was bound to a carpenter. His brother, meanwhile, did nothing: his foolish parents thought he was so handsome, that he might make his fortune by marrying; and they meant to try to raise money enough to buy him a commission in the army, for "how handsome John would look in a red coat!" They did not however hit upon this sensible plan till they had tried another in vain. An old friend of theirs, an apothecary, took John out of kindness into his shop, with a very small premium; but being wholly unaccustomed to obey, he soon told his master he would not do any dirty work; and on his being reproved for disobedience and impertinence, he without leave returned home, where he met with sympathy and indulgence instead of proper chastisement and reproof; and his parents resolved not to expose so fine a

gentleman, and a youth of such a *proper spirit*, to such degradation in future.

At eighteen John Douglas was the tyrant of the parents who doted on him, and the slave of his own uncontroulable temper and ungovernable passions.

It was soon certain that no money could ever be raised to buy a commission, as John ran in debt, and his father was not only forced to maintain him, but to pay money to save him from disgrace. "Sweet are the uses of adversity," and safer is it for a child to be thwarted and reproved than to be petted and never contradicted: therefore, while John Douglas became more despicable every day, the virtues of Ronald Douglas every day increased.

The neighbours loved and pitied him; and if there was a kind action to be done, Ronald was asked to do it. His master said he worked hard and well at his business, and would be the best carpenter in the place; and while temperance, industry,

and exercise gave health to his cheek and size to his manly limbs, he as much outtowered his brother in stature as he excelled him in character. This was an injury which John and his mother highly resented; and a sort of vindictive dislike of Ronald, whose superiority he felt, took possession of the heart of John Douglas, which already showed itself on his countenance, and impressed on it those traces of malignity which made his face, if once seen, —especially when under the influence of such feelings,—never to be forgotten.

Ronald Douglas was so formed for the tenderest feelings of filial love, that nothing could supply to his disappointed heart the want of parental affection. He therefore acquired habits of lonely musing and reverie, in which a sort of ideal world supplied the place of real objects; and life as it *might* be, was contrasted by him with life as it *was*. He was not however insensible to the kindness which

he experienced out of his own family; and the heart shut up at home opened abroad.

A house in the village, which had been long uninhabited, had at length found a tenant; and before the new inhabitant took possession, he wished a vault or drain belonging to it to be wholly removed. Accordingly, four men were hired to go down the dark steps which led to it; and foolishly enough, they all went down together. But they had not been down five minutes, when they answered not to the signals which were made to them, and great apprehensions were entertained for their lives, as the vault had not been entered for years, and the vapours in it must consequently be of a most deadly nature. Alarm now spread through the village, and the wives and children of the poor men came clamouring and lamenting round. For who would have courage and benevolence enough to risk his own life in order to preserve theirs? No one could

even be expected to do it; and all hope for the unhappy victims was at an end, when Ronald Douglas was walking near the spot, and seeing the crowd, came to ask what was the matter. They informed him; and his heart was melted to the most painful compassion by the tears and agonies of the mourners.

"How long have they been down?" said he.

"A very short time; and they might be recovered probably. But who," added the person to whom he spoke, "will go down and risk his own life for the chance of preserving theirs?"

"I will*," cried Ronald: and whether

* This generous action, under circumstances similar to what I have described, was really performed in a village in France by a girl only twenty years old, whose name was Catherine Vassent; and she received in person, at the Academy in Paris, the yearly prize adjudged to virtue. She also received great honours in her own village. I have seen a French drama on this subject.

it was from the impulse of benevolence alone, or that life had fewer charms for him than for the rest, he insisted on being allowed to descend, and on having the requisite precautions procured directly.

"But, dear Ronald," cried one, "we dare not let you do this without your father's and mother's leave."

"Their leaves!" cried Ronald, staring, and the hectic of a moment passing over his cheeks, while he replied in a bitter tone, "Oh! they would not deny it to me; and if you hesitate any longer, I will go *without* what I ask."

As he said this he descended two or three steps into the vault; and finding him resolved, they gave him what he required. This was a rope, one end of which was to be held by those above, a jug of vinegar, and a light in a lantern. Armed with these, he courageously descended to the bottom of the gloomy abyss, but was so suffocated by the vapours from it, that he

scarcely had power to throw a little vinegar about it, when he fell nearly fainting to the ground. But his noble and generous spirit gathered new strength from the difficulty; and having applied the vinegar to his nostrils, he recovered, and threw a great part of the contents of the jug into the darkness before him. As he expected, the pestiferous damp dispersed, and he was able to distinguish the four men lying at the foot of the steps, and part of their bodies in the putrid stream. He instantly re-ascended the steps for a grappling-hook; and returning, he tied a rope to the man nearest him, and called to those above to drag the rope up. They did so, while he assisted the senseless body in its unconscious progress, and preserved it from being dashed against the sides of the vault. It reached the top in safety; and Ronald, encouraged by his success, descended for another, and he too was

drawn up without much difficulty. But the third was further in the stream; and as Ronald was forced to stoop lower over it than before, he felt himself turn sick and faint; and when he and his charge reached the air, he fainted away: but he soon recovered, and insisted on going down again. He did so, and saved another from destruction. Again he descended; but the fourth was deeply sunk in the water, and it was with the greatest difficulty he succeeded in dragging him to the steps. However, he persevered, and he too was once more restored to the eyes of his anxious relatives; but not to life. The others soon showed signs of returning consciousness, but he was gone for ever; and Ronald felt his joy incomplete, because he had not been able to preserve them all.

A scene now ensued that I would fain paint, but cannot; the wives and children hanging with suspended breath

over the bodies, whose heaving bosoms began to give assurance of struggling existence; the widow and the orphans mourning over him whose eyes could never unclose again; and another group surrounding Ronald, blessing him, and calling him by the most tender and gratifying appellations! But he was one who was inclined "to do good by stealth," and "blushed to find it fame." Accordingly, he suddenly broke from them all, and springing over a hedge, escaped along a by-path to the back of his father's garden, and entering it unseen by a gap in the hedge, threw himself under a favourite tree, hid his face in his hands, and burst into tears,—the result of mingled and contending emotions. He had saved the lives of three of his fellow-creatures, and these three were also his neighbours and acquaintance. They were husbands too, and they were fathers; and he was rich in the consciousness of not having lived in

vain, and in being endeared and respected throughout his native place.

But, oh! bitter was the drawback to his joy; for instead of being able to hasten to his parents to tell his tale of virtuous triumph to them, and cause their hearts to participate in the joy of his, he knew that they would receive the story with coldness and indifference, and would probably damp all his generous exultation by saying, "What a busy fool you were for running such a risk!" Yet still he felt a sensation of happiness predominating over the rest of his feelings; and as he raised his eyes in heart-felt gratitude to heaven, he felt the repinings of his spirit gradually but entirely subside.

When the poor men were able to speak, and to ask how they were preserved, those around missed the generous Ronald, and told with tearful incoherence the tale of his benevolent daring.

"Where is he? Where is the noble

boy?" cried many voices at once; and the rescued men were eager to see and bless him.

"We will go to his house; we will carry him round the village," said some sailors just paid off from a ship in a neighbouring port.

"Aye, and we will make him a civic crown," said Ronald's master, glad to display his learning in his beloved pupil's honour. Then running to his garden, he pulled a branch of laurel; which, being tied together at the ends, the delighted old man carried in his hand as the procession marched, shouting and huzzaing through the road that led to the house of Ronald.

As they went, the pallid but animated look of the men, whom their wives and children supported, the civic garland, the procession,—in short, the whole scene together, attracted the attention of two

sentimental travellers who were walking along to enjoy the pleasant weather, with their servants and carriage following slowly at a distance; and they stopped to inquire the reason of what they saw.

Those to whom they spoke were as willing to tell as the travellers to hear; and they congratulated each other on their good fortune in coming through the village at such a moment.

"How I should like to see this noble boy!" said the lady.

"How I should like to serve him!" cried the gentleman.

On hearing this, the good schoolmaster begged they would join the party, and go to the house with them; and then, as they walked along, he told them the history of poor Ronald in all its painful details.

The husband and wife now fell back

from the rest, and held a conversation together, in a low voice.

I shall pause in my narrative, to give some account of these travellers.

The husband, Mr. Fullarton, left his native land and Edinburgh, the city of his birth, to go as a writer to India. He went reluctantly, for he was in love; but, as he had no fortune independent of his father, and that father would give him nothing during his life, he was forced to accept the offered place, and try to earn the power of marrying the girl of his heart. To industry like his, stimulated by the tenderest of affections, fortune could not long remain a stranger; and Grace Douglas was summoned to India sooner than even her sanguine expectations led her to hope. She was accompanied thither by her sister, who some time after had pledged her own vows to an English gentleman, of the name of

Hatfield. But a different lot awaited her; for while Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton were the happiest of the happy, Mr. and Mrs. Hatfield were the most ill-assorted couple in Calcutta; and the only comfort of the latter was derived from the society of her brother and sister.

But they, happy as they were, had drawbacks to their felicity. They had an only child, who died at the age of six years, just as they were going to send him to England for education; and as years rolled on without giving another child to their wishes, they had at length made up their minds to the disappointment.

Mrs. Fullarton now received a letter from Scotland, and from the aunt who had brought her up. This lady told her she was dying of an incurable complaint, but one that might not destroy her for months. She therefore wrote to say, that should they have any intention of

revisiting Britain, she hoped they would not delay putting it in execution, as she earnestly wished to embrace her niece, if possible, once more before she died.

"Poor, dear woman!" cried Mr. Fullarton, as he read the letter.

"We had no intention of going, as you know, Grace; but, for her sake we will set off directly. It is due to her, is it not, Grace?"

The delighted and grateful wife could only weep her thanks, and every thing was put in train directly for their sailing.

"But what will become of me, if you never return?" said poor Mrs. Hatfield. "Your father, Mr. Fullarton, is supposed to be declining fast; and as you are now the only son, should he die, your return must be out of the question, as his estates will be yours. And how can I exist without the comfort and protection of your presence?"

"We will *certainly* come back at *all* events, on your account," he replied. "We have no children, and one place is the same to us as another: therefore, why not live in India, as the climate suits us? and if our living near you is a comfort to you, how can you think we will not return?"

"Kindest of men!" faltered out the grateful invalid, while her unhappy sister folded her in an affectionate embrace, and sighed to think how unlike their husbands were. Soon after the Fullartons embarked for Britain.

But, agreed as they were on most subjects, these good people differed on *one*. They were both not a little given to romance and enthusiasm, and were great admirers of heroism and self-devotion. But Mr. Fullarton earnestly wished for the abrogation of that Hindoo law which obliges a Hindoo wife to burn herself on the body

of her husband. Mrs. Fullarton, on the contrary, reprobated as cruel the wish to prevent a widow from thus sacrificing herself, declaring with tears in her eyes, that for her part *she* could not consider the law as inflicting any *hardship* on a woman, but that it was a mercy, not a cruelty. Mr. Fullarton probably was not convinced by what his wife said; but he always dropped the subject after she had thus spoken, and used to be troubled with a sort of hoarseness and choking cough when she ceased to speak.

Such were the persons who, having closed the eyes both of his father and her aunt, were now on their way from Scotland to London, previous to re-embarking for India, when they came through the village of L——, and time enough to witness a scene so truly in unison with their high-wrought imaginations and benevolent hearts.

But to return. Our travellers were roused from their earnest conversation, by the shouts of the sailors and others who declared that they were arrived at Ronald's door. Ronald, as I before stated, was lying under a tree in the garden, and his father and mother were taking their afternoon's sleep in their chairs. The noise which these unexpected visitants made roused them from their slumbers, and the father starting up ran to the door and opened it.

"We want your son," cried they: "We want to carry the brave lad in triumph round the village, to do him *honour*."

"Honour to my son! Oh, I will call him directly!"

On which, he went to call John, asking him how he had deserved such respect. He could not tell; but he eagerly followed his father down stairs, and with

his exulting mother went to the door, bowing and smiling with ineffable conceit

"Not you, you poor fair-weather sailor!" cried one of the tars, "it is your brother we want."

"You have *two* sons, Mr. Douglas," said Mr. Fullarton with emphasis: "We want that fine fellow, Ronald: where is *he?*"

"Dear me! I am sure I do not know," said his mother.

"Nor I," said John, pale with spite.

"I think I saw him jump the hedges, and enter the garden," cried one.

"Then we will have him out," cried another; and into the garden they all went, Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton eagerly following.

Ronald started up at the noise they made, and stood in silent wonder at their appearance; but, as soon as the reason of it was explained to him, he suddenly

turned round, and attempted to run away. But he was instantly seized, and Mr. Fullarton gently assured him that he ought not to deny his friends and neighbours the pleasure of expressing their gratitude and love for him, in any way they chose.

Ronald bowed respectfully, but remained silent; while Mrs. Fullarton was whispering her husband, "What a fine creature! I declare, he is like my poor brother, who died at sixteen. I dare say he is of our blood, for his name is Douglas, you know."

Mr. Fullarton now introduced himself and his wife to Ronald, and Mrs. Fullarton exclaimed—

"Noble boy! blessed is the mother who bore you! Mrs. Douglas, you must be proud of your son."

"If you will tell me why, madam, for I cannot think what you are all about so crazy like, I take it."

Mr. Fullarton then told the wondering but not elated parents the whole story, corroborated by their neighbours, and the poor men themselves, who with their wives and children were surrounding Ronald, and blessing him with quivering lips. — This was more than he could endure; his breast heaved, his limbs trembled, and he wanted, nay longed, to throw himself on the neck of his parents; but, alas! he could not do it, and invited by the glistening eye and kind look of Mr. Fullarton, who stood by him, he threw himself on his shoulder and wept aloud.

"Ronald, for shame! what a liberty you are taking with the gentleman!" cried his mother.

"Ronald, what are you about?" said his father: "the boy's head is turned, he quite forgets himself!"

"No," replied Mr. Fullarton sternly, as Ronald withdrew from his embrace,

—"No; he only remembers too well, poor boy! and knows that the heart of a stranger yearned towards him more than that of his parents. But from this moment my heart adopts him."

"And so does mine," cried Mrs. Fullarton, grasping his hand: "and I will be a mother to him."

"And I a father!" While the good old schoolmaster threw up his cap in the air, and exclaimed, "Ronald will be a gentleman, and need not neglect his Latin."

"But come, we will not lose our frolic for all that—so have at you, young man," said two of the sailors, seizing Ronald as they spoke; while Norton, the schoolmaster, now presented him with the civic wreath, repeating as he did so, some lines from Horace.

Ronald was too much overwhelmed by all he saw and felt, to be able to reply, or to resist; and when they had led him to

the door, they soon hoisted him on their shoulders, and led the procession. The poor men wished to join in it, though they felt still weak from their danger; but, as Mr. Fullarton's carriage now drove up, that gentleman insisted on their entering it, and they, the most interesting persons in the show next to their preserver, brought up the rear. Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton with Ronald's parents stood at the gate looking at it till it was out of sight, and even the latter did not seem to hear unmoved those unbought shouts in honour of their son; but the former listened with glistening eyes, and with an exquisite feeling of gratified benevolence, which they felt grateful to Ronald for having so unexpectedly procured them.

But where was John Douglas while these honours were conferred on his younger brother? Did he walk in the procession, and join in the general en-

thusiasm with a brother's heart? No: he shut himself up in his own room till the procession was out of sight; and he held his ears, muttering curses as he did so, that the acclamations might not agonize his envious and ungenerous mind.

When he ceased to hear or to see what he disliked, he came down stairs, and was not agreeably surprised to find Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton sitting with his father and mother.

"Well, then, Mrs. Douglas, you say you have no objection to letting me adopt your son, and to provide for him in life as I choose."

"Not if you think him worth your troubling yourself, sir," said Mrs. Douglas. (She dared not in the presence of John say any thing but what was uncivil of his brother.) "But I must say, we have found him sulky and dull, and only good enough to be a working carpenter."

"I did not speak to you, Mrs. Douglas," said Mr. Fullarton. "What say you, sir? will you part with your son or not?"

"Why you see, sir, he is bound to a carpenter."

"Well, but for a certain consideration no doubt he will give up his indentures."

"But who is to pay that, sir?"

"I, to be sure."

"Well, really," cried the incorrigible mother, "to think that any one should take such a fancy to Ronald! Had it been to John, indeed, I should not have wondered.—Smooth down your hair, my darling; you do not look well to-day; the gentlefolks do not see you to advantage."

"Mother, hold your tongue; you are an old fool," was the dutiful answer.

"Pray, Mrs. Douglas," said Mrs. Fullarton, "did your darling John ever save the lives of three of his fellow-creatures, at the risk of his own?"

"La! no: he was never so silly; for

suppose he had been suffocated, you know. Why, if John had done it, and been—O, dear! the thought turns me all over like—"

"There is no fear, I fancy, of his ever trying your sensibility thus: but may I ask in what way your son John has claims on any one's preference over Ronald?"

"Look at him," replied the fond mother.

"But what can he do? Is he clever in any trade or profession?"

"Oh! no: he was always too quick to learn."

"Peace! you silly woman," said Mr. Douglas; "the truth is, John has good parts, but is very idle, and at present I am forced to maintain him: but he is a fine-looking genteel lad."

"Aye, that he is—and he *is* a lad to make a gentleman of *indeed*."

"What a sarcasm on gentlemen!" said Mr. Fullarton. "So then, a lad that

calls his mother an old fool; that cannot learn; and who at the age of twenty chooses to be a burthen to his poor father and mother, rather than work for his living, is exactly fitted for a gentleman, is he?—But I beg pardon; I am taking great liberties here."

"Do not mind what my foolish wife says," replied Mr. Douglas, who had sense enough to feel the justice of this reproof; "but tell me all your goodness intends for Ronald."

"We are on our return to India, and we wish to take Ronald with us."

"To India!" screamed out Mrs. Douglas. "Oh! then I do not care that John is not the favourite, for it would have killed me to have him go to the Indies!"

"Hold your tongue, mother; if I like, I will go in spite of you."

"Yes," continued Mr. Fullarton; "I have had a writership offered me for a

young friend, and I mean to give it to Ronald, if he likes to accept it."

"Likes to accept it!" cried the father; "I should like to see him dare refuse it."

"He shall refuse it if he wishes to do so, sir; for I will not punish the virtue I meant to reward; but I believe, from what I see of poor Ronald's home, that he will be glad to accept it. In that admirable woman, I assure you, sir, he will find a mother, and in me a father; and if I read him aright, I doubt not but when he has made a fortune, which he will do very soon, that he will remember you as his parents, and nobly too."

"Mother," exclaimed John Douglas, with a face crimson with passion, and almost inarticulate with ungovernable feelings, "Mother, if you let Ronald go to India, and be put so over my head, I will *kill* myself." Then, with a malignant scowl at the strangers, he left the room, bang-

ing the door to with a violence that shook the house; on which his mother fell into an hysterical cry, and declared Ronald should not go, to kill her poor darling John.

This roused the now indignant spirit of her husband; and no longer awed by the presence of that child whom they had petted into a tyrant, before whose frown they trembled, the old man declared that he should scarcely lament if John was dead, for that then he would be safe from evils to come, and that he was the torment and terror of his life; adding, that no consideration for John should induce him to refuse to let Ronald go. In the midst of this conversation the procession returned, and Ronald eagerly escaped from the oppressive kindness of his friends, into his own house, and, followed by the delighted Norton, entered the parlour with a countenance full of emotion and a cheek glowing with modest triumph.

"Is that the countenance of a dull and sullen boy?" said Mrs. Fullarton smiling, and holding out her hand to Ronald.

"He dull and sullen!" said Norton, coming forward, but bowing very low; "he was the pride of my school, and the joy of my heart."

"And I trust that he will be the joy of ours," said Mr. Fullarton.

"Ronald, will you go with us to India, and make your fortune?"

"I will go any where with you," replied Ronald eagerly. It was the first time that his new friends had heard his voice, and its deep but sweet tone added to the favourable impression which he had made on them.

"But will my father and mother consent? and can I break my indentures?"

"I think you were very ready to leave us, Ronald," said his father consistently

with his usual injustice; "the indentures can be broken."

"That they can, for his master is my brother, and loves him as I do," said old Norton, "and will never stand in the way of Ronald's promotion. To be sure I shall miss him, and I can never hope to see him again; but it is for his good, I trust." Here he turned to the window to hide his emotion.

"Then I may look on these matters as settled, Mr. Douglas: you consent to Ronald's acceptance of the writership, and to his going with us to India; but he must come up to London in three or four days, as he has to procure his out-fit; and by that time he will have arranged all his affairs here, and taken leave of all his friends."

"Agreed, sir," said Mr. Douglas; "he is yours—do with him what you please, and God bless you for your goodness!"

"Now then, my love," said Mr. Fullarton, "we must go a stage on our way to London. We shall soon meet again, Ronald; till then, God bless you!" and Ronald, unable to speak, could only grasp the kind hands tendered to him.

The Fullartons did not quit the village without leaving marks of their bounty amongst all those who had done honour to their *protégé;* nor were the poor men whom he had saved forgotten. To old Norton Mr. Fullarton promised the last new edition of Horace; and he declared he should not sleep that night for joy.

Ronald, still unable to believe his good fortune was not a dream, looked after the carriage till he could see it no longer, and then returned to meet very different persons and looks from those which the departing carriage contained. He found his mother wondering what business any one had to come and make mischief by med-

dling and making in her family; and seeing him, she exclaimed, "Ah! here you come; you were never any thing but a plague to me since you had the small-pox, and grew so ugly; and now you are going over sea, and that vexes John."

"Is John sorry to part with me?" said Ronald joyfully.

"Sorry!" cried his father; "No, he is only sorry for your good fortune."

John now entered the room with the look of a fiend, saying, "There is something for the *new gentleman!*" and the maid servant brought in a paper parcel directed to Ronald, which a waiter at the only inn in the village had brought. On opening it, it was found to contain a complete suit of black clothes, and linen to wear with them; and was accompanied by the following note from Mr. Fullarton:—

"My dear Ronald,

"My wife and I cannot bear that you should wear longer than you can help, those coarse habiliments, which, though proper for your former situation, are not so for that which you are about to occupy. I have therefore sent you a suit of clothes, which I have not yet worn, and which, as we are of the same height and size, you will, I trust, be able to wear; and I *charge* you to go to church next *Sunday* in them.

"Your affectionate friend,

"W. FULLARTON."

Ronald told as much of the contents of the note as he thought proper, then retired to fit on the present of his benefactor. But seeing the storm on his brother's brow, he would not wear the clothes that evening; but he walked to

Norton's house in his usual dress, and spent the evening with him.

Norton's brother gave up Ronald's indentures immediately, and was very unwilling to receive any recompense. Half the sum offered was all he would accept; and Ronald resolved that he should be no loser by it.

Ronald did not return home till bed-time: he found his mother sitting up for John, who was gone to sup with a rider from London, with whom he often associated, and from whom he learnt no good. This strange woman reproached Ronald for going out and leaving his parents during one of the three last evenings he was ever to spend at home. However unjust this reproach was, the good heart of Ronald was pleased at it, and he hailed it as a sign of affection—not seeing that it was nothing more than the ebullition of ill humour, which had nothing else to vent itself upon.

"My dear mother," said Ronald, "depend on it, I will not quit you again till I go."

"There is reason in roasting of eggs, child," replied Mrs. Douglas; "and I am sure I do not want you to be tied to my apron-strings."

They now heard John's voice at the door, in his loudest and surliest tone; and the weak terrified parent, suspecting that intoxication had probably rendered John more fierce than usual, entreated Ronald to go to bed before she let his brother in, and to lock his door. Ronald instantly obeyed her in both particulars: and it was well he did; for John did try to enter his chamber; and as he could not, vented his ill-humour on the outside in oaths and execrations.

The next day was Sunday; and Ronald, dressed in his new apparel, descended to the breakfast-table. Spite of her folly and her envious partiality to John,

Mrs. Douglas could not see Ronald with his really fine person, set off by the dress of a gentleman, without feeling both pride and pleasure at the sight—and, O unexpected favour! she desired him to come and kiss her, for he looked charmingly in his new dress.

"My child," said his father, his voice faltering with a much deeper feeling,—"God grant you long health to wear them, and many others! and I trust you will live to be somebody."

"I hope, I trust, sir," replied Ronald, "that under no circumstances shall I ever disgrace you."

"Disgrace! No: I expect you will prove an *honour* to us."

This was the happiest moment which his parents had ever given poor Ronald—a kiss from his mother, and flattering speeches from his father! and he went to church with a heart glowing with gra-

titude to heaven. There was not an eye there, which on his entrance did not welcome Ronald. The poor men whom he had saved were at church; and the clergyman, at their desire, returned thanks for their signal deliverance; while Ronald's feelings at that moment were such as any one living might have envied.

As soon as the service concluded, Ronald left his pew, wishing to escape without speaking to any one; especially as the clergyman in his sermon and in his text made an obvious allusion to Ronald's heroic, or rather *Christian* action. But he was not allowed so to evade notice; and he was asked by the rector to dine with him; an honour he, however, refused, because it would be the last Sunday he might ever spend with his parents.

"I honour your motives, young man;

they are worthy of you," replied the gentleman; "and I do not urge you further. Farewell, then! I trust, by the blessing of God, that I shall live to see you return to us full of honours; for, according to an old saying, 'A good beginning makes a good ending.'"

John Douglas had been so excessively intoxicated the night before, that he did not rise till late the next day; and as he was not present to prevent the natural flow of his parents' feelings towards Ronald, the morning and the dinner hours were unusually pleasant to him. His heart, therefore, yearned towards his father and mother with feelings which he had scarcely ever experienced before; and while he thought that he was about to leave them and home, perhaps for ever, his spirits sunk, till, in the delusive softness of the moment, he fancied that his home was worthy of regret, and

he "sighed as he thought of the morrow."

While these ideas crossed his mind, and as he remembered how age would have changed his parents before he saw them again, he drew his chair close to his mother's, leaned affectionately on the arm of it, and would have taken her hand as it rested on her knee; but she pettishly drew back her hand and her chair, exclaiming:

"There, child! do sit further off, or you will set your chair on my gown."

Ronald drew back as he was bidden to do, chilled and disappointed. Soon after, John made his appearance, when his mother pressed him to sit by her, asked him what he would like to have, and bestowed on the thankless elder-born what would have bound the younger to her for ever.

John replied, by telling her to hold

her palaver, and not plague him—and on her saying, "Take this easy chair, love," he accepted the offer; but then, declaring the room was so hot he could not bear it, he ran to the window and opened the casement.

"I cannot bear the air at my back, John," said his father.

"Then change your seat."

"But your mother has a bad cold; you must not keep the window open long, it is a north wind."

"*Must* not!" he replied with a sort of defiance; then lolling out of the window, he began to sing.

"It is Sunday, John," said his mother; "you forget that."

"So did you, I fancy—for you did not go to church—therefore hold *your* tongue."

"It is plain, *you* never go to church," said his father; "for you seem not to have

learnt the commandment, to 'honour your father and your mother.'"

"Did they ever *teach* me to honour them?"

"We have tried, John, to make you love us, however; yet, I believe poor Ronald, to whom we have never been very kind, loves us better than you do."

"The more fool he;—but what have we here? Carpenter Ronald turned gentleman, I declare! and dressed out in his master's cast-off clothes!—Turn about, Ronald, and let us look at you."

Ronald meekly obeyed; nor did he deign to notice the insulting word of "master," or the "cast-off clothes."

But his mother, who had felt great respect for Ronald's dress, if not for him, had the rashness to reply,

"Nay, John, the gentleman is not Ronald's master; he is to be his friend, not his servant; and as to the clothes,

they are *quite new*, and the gentleman never put them on in his life."

"It is a lie; I know they are not new."

"A lie!" cried his mother in a tearful voice, "I am sure I do not lie."

"Yes, you do; and I wonder Ronald is not ashamed to wear any one's old clothes."

"Old or new," returned Mrs. Douglas, rising as she spoke with more spirit than was usual to her, and approaching to shut the window, "Ronald may be proud to wear them, for he earned them by his good deeds, and that is more than other persons can say for themselves."

The poor woman had scarcely ended her ill-advised speech, when John gave her a blow which made her stagger, adding, "And if you dare affront me again, or presume to shut the window till I choose, I will turn you out of the room." He

then seized her by the arm with a violence which made her scream.

Ronald, who had borne his own insults with meekness, could not so endure the injuries of his mother; but, seizing his brutal brother with one hand in his nervous grasp, he opened the door with the other, and threw him into the passage.

"My noble boy!" sobbed out his self-accused father, *you* have done what *I* should have done; but it is too late now."

His mother said nothing at first; she only listened to the angry threats of John, as he walked up and down.

At length she said, "I will not have John turned out of the room by any one; he shall come in."

"Aye, go to your petted brute," said Mr. Douglas, "and make much of him; your weak indulgence, poor lad, has made him what he is."

"With a little of your assistance, my dear," said she, unbarring the door.

"John, my darling! I am not angry with you; I forgive you, dear! Do come in, pray do."

"No, that I will not (he replied in a voice of thunder); I will go away, and never come back; at least, never till Ronald is gone."

"Well, dear, well; Ronald goes tomorrow, you know."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Ronald, cut to the quick by the tone of joy, rather than of sorrow, in which his mother said this; and rushing out of the room, passing his brother, who shrunk back terrified at his approach, he ran and threw himself under the tree where he had lain when his benefactors first approached him; that tree which was always his refuge when unhappy within doors, and was now dear to him from association

and recollection. But it was long before he could succeed in pacifying his wounded spirit. It was, therefore, long ere he ventured to return to the house: when he did so, he found John was gone out, and his mother was in earnest conversation with his father.

"I tell you what, Ronald," said she; "I will not suffer you to take on yourself to correct your brother: the poor lad did not hurt me, nor mean to hurt me much, I am sure."

"Not much!" replied Ronald.

"No: there was no harm in what he did."

"No *harm*, mother? Is not the curse of the Almighty on the child who lifts his arm against his parent?"

"How shocking you talk, Ronald! But pray, was not that man Cain cursed who lifted his arm against his brother Abel? I wonder who was like Cain just now?

Answer me that." But his heart was too full.

"You see what you get by taking your mother's part," said Mr. Douglas; "but don't mind what she says. I tell you that I am convinced the blessing of the Almighty will go with you wherever you go. O Ronald! I am justly punished for all my harshness to you; now that I feel your worth, I am going to lose you for ever!"

Ronald would fain have offered to stay if he wished it; but he was conscious that these parental feelings were called forth by circumstances only, and might vanish again; he was besides pledged to accept the proffered kindness of his new friends. While this was passing, his mother angrily left the room, and went in search of her darling; but he was still absent, and till he came home, all quiet conversation between Ronald and his father was destroyed

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by her restlessness. He came home, however, to supper; but, though sullen, was not savage, to the surprise and comfort of Ronald. He did not, indeed, speak to him or to any one; but his silence after Ronald's spirited action in defence of his mother, was a sign of abated hostility. When he was gone to bed, and Ronald rose to retire also, wishing his parents Good night, even Mrs. Douglas heard and was affected by his faltering voice, and could not help observing, "Dear me, Ronald! well, who knows if we shall ever wish each other good night again? There is something very awful, as I think, in that: well, poor child! I am sure I wish you well, and hope you will forget and forgive whenever I was cross; for you did provoke me sometimes, that is the truth of it; but come, Ronald dear! kiss and be friends."

He affectionately met her offered kiss;

then turned to wring and press the trembling hand of his father.

"Ronald, my dear ill-treated boy," said he, "all *I* ask of you is to think as *little* ill of us as you can, and write to us when it suits you." Ronald's only answer was his tears; and he gladly hurried to his chamber.

The next morning he rose very early, visited all the scenes of his first and dearest recollections, and called on all his neighbours and friends, except the poor men whose lives he had saved: the clamorous expressions of their regret, good wishes, and gratitude, his delicacy and his nerves equally shrunk from encountering.

"But I will see my dear old master," said Ronald to himself, "in all his glory once more." Accordingly, he approached his school-room; but the bee-like hum of many voices was not heard, and all was

still and silent. "How strange!" thought he; "and so long after the hour of meeting too!" However, he knocked; and Norton's voice replied in a mournful tone, "Come in." He did so, and found the poor old man alone, sitting leaning his head on his arm, which rested on his knee, as if lost in mournful reflection. At sight of Ronald, he started up, and his countenance became cheerful, but it soon clouded over again.

"Why are you not keeping school today, my dear friend?"

"Why, because you are going away. Not that your going away is a holiday, child; oh, no! with me it is one of sorrow and humiliation of spirit: but I could not have done my duty by the children when I thought of you, and that I had seen you for the last time."

"Come, come; you must not talk or think thus," replied Ronald in a faltering

tone; "I have need of all my spirits, as I am going away."

"No, Ronald; they suffer most at parting who stay behind; and it will be so sad to look for you, and look in vain! But it is all for your good, and so I do not repine—at least I try to do so as little as I can help."

It is not to be supposed, when Ronald had taken leave of this attached old friend, that he returned home more fitted than before to bear parting with his parents with firmness. On the contrary, as he forgot their past unkindness in their present affectionate behaviour, he left them with a degree of tender regret and violent sorrow which their conduct to him had little deserved; and when the coach stopped, he could scarcely distinguish his way to it, so great was the disorder of his feelings. Just as he was going to get into the coach, John, who was not yet up, though it was twelve

o'clock, and he knew his brother was to go at that time, opened his window, and cried out, "Good bye, Ronald, and be sure to write *often* to us."

Ronald's heart bounded with pleasure at this unexpected mark of kindness, while he kissed his hand in return, and nodded the adieu which he could not utter.

As the coach passed through the village, numbers came out to take their last look of Ronald; and amongst them, as he feared, the men whom he had preserved; nor would they allow the coach to go on till they had poured forth all their hearts were full of. Their children had culled the best flowers of their gardens as a parting gift to Ronald; and the fathers themselves had subscribed to buy him a keep-sake. By the advice of Norton, the money was laid out on a prayer-book with silver clasps, and this with blessings and with tears, and grasping of

his extended hands, they now gave to the equally agitated Ronald, and then reluctantly allowed the coach to drive on; while he threw himself back in one corner, and hid his face in his handkerchief. When he had recovered himself, he opened the book, and read in the blank leaf written by Norton himself—

"The gift of Robert Jones, William Alsop, and Richard Merrick, in token of their affectionate gratitude to Ronald Douglas, who risked his own life to preserve theirs.—God prosper all your undertakings, and restore you with health and wealth to your native land!"

"Amen," said Ronald, and kissing the book put it into his bosom.

There was only one passenger in the coach besides Ronald; and he had not beheld this parting scene unmoved.

"Those flowers will soon die," said he. "What a pity! as they are the tribute

of grateful children to their fathers' preserver!"

"Sir!" cried Ronald.

"Yes, I know it is so; I know you cannot be other than Ronald Douglas, the adopted son of my friend Fullarton. I am proud, young man, to make your acquaintance."

To have such a companion was indeed a pleasant circumstance to Ronald, whose heart was sad, spite of his brilliant prospects; and who now catching the *last glimpse* of his native place and the village spire from a hill which they had just ascended, looked till he saw them no more; then tried, in order to escape from himself, to enter into conversation with this friend of his friends; and rapidly passed the time with our travellers till they reached London.

If Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton had been struck with Ronald's appearance when

they beheld him in the dress of a working mechanic, they could not but be still more pleased with it when they saw him in the apparel of a gentleman; and they congratulated each other on their fortunate visit to the village of L——. Again and again also did Mrs. Fullarton advert to the surprising likeness between Ronald and the brother whom she had lost, never failing to add, "I should not at all wonder, my dear, if this dear boy were really a distant relation of mine."

"Yes, and the *father* and *John* also, Grace," her husband used to reply, smiling at her enthusiasm. "Remember, if you own one of the family, you must own all."

"And for Ronald's sake, as I told you before, I do not care if I do own them all. If one gathers the rose, one must take the thorns along with it."

The summons to go to Portsmouth

now arrived, and in a short time Ronald and his benefactors bade a long farewell to their native land.

There is a time when the most rational enthusiasm looks back appalled in some measure on the actions to which it has been impelled; and even the benevolent Fullartons began to consider with some sort of misgiving their generous interference in Ronald's favour, and the responsibility which theyhad entailed on themselves.

They had been almost eye witnesses of Ronald's heroic actions; they had witnessed the love and respect which his friends and neighbours felt towards him; and they had heard that he bore the unkindness of his parents with dutiful forbearance. They had also discovered that he was a good scholar and loved reading. But how would he appear in the circles of Calcutta?

"And yet," said they to each other, "what should we fear? Of his excellence of heart we have seen undoubted proofs; it is not likely, therefore, that he should ever disgrace our protection by his immorality and manners: the mere external polish of the man may be acquired; meanwhile, his countenance and his person are themselves letters of recommendation, and we may tell the story of his noble daring without mentioning the obscurity from which we took him."

In the meanwhile they were anxious to observe what effect Ronald would produce on the company on board ship.

This was a subject on which Ronald was equally anxious. For the first time he found himself in the company of persons who would expect from him manners and accomplishments befitting the situation in life which he now occupied; and Ronald trembled lest he should dis-

grace his benefactors by his ignorance and his awkwardness.

But this salutary fear made him silent, retiring, and cautious in what he said or did, till the pleasing certainty stole over him that all he said and did would be kindly received; for his quick eye soon discovered that his kind friends had told of his exploit; and his understanding taught him, that an action which they thought it an honour to him to relate, would be likely to throw a veil over his defects, and interest his auditors in his favour. Nor was it long before he was able to bring into use the little accomplishments which he possessed. He could sing, and play the flute; and though, being conscious of his own want of skill, he refused to join in the merry dance in an evening, he could play reels and waltzes for others; and before the ship reached Calcutta, Ronald was the most

distinguished favourite on board: therefore, all his patrons' fears and misgivings were scattered to the winds; and Mr. Fullarton's hope that Ronald Douglas would do nothing to disgrace him, was lost in the pleasing certainty that Ronald Douglas would do honour to his adoption.

But for some weeks before the ship reached its destination, Mr. Fullarton thought that he saw an alteration in his wife's manner whenever he talked of his intended plans for Ronald. She seemed particularly restrained and reserved whenever he conversed of him as his future heir. Mr. Fullarton was too tender a husband not to be anxious at witnessing any change in a wife so beloved, and his earnest solicitations at length drew from her a reason for her conduct: it was a reason which filled his affectionate heart

with joy; and he soon convinced her, that if Ronald were the worthy being whom they believed him to be, he would rejoice in the circumstance which rejoiced his benefactors.

The truth was, that Mrs. Fullarton was again likely to become a mother, after having for many years desired this blessing in vain; therefore Ronald's expectations of being their heir would be, if the child lived, entirely frustrated.

"Well, now we shall be able to try whether Ronald loves us for *ourselves*, or not," said Mr. Fullarton. But one glance at Ronald's expressive face, when Mr. Fullarton informed him of his wife's expectations, carried the most pleasing convictions to his heart; his eyes sparkled with unaffected delight, and seizing his benefactor's hand, he exclaimed,

"O my dear sir! this alone was wanting to your happiness; but now I trust it will be as perfect as I wish it."

"Then you do not think of *yourself*, Ronald," said Mr. Fullarton; "for we promised to consider you as our child, you know."

"And will still, I trust, in the only way in which I ever expected or desired to be considered."

"Then, pray, what meaning did you annex to our words, when we told you we should adopt you as our son?"

"I thought you engaged to treat me with the kindness of parents: that kindness, I mean, which parents *usually* show to their children," he added, deeply sighing. "But I never thought that you meant to provide for me as a son; and having given me the means of making my own fortune, I expected nothing more."

"Well, Ronald, then the only draw-

back to the pleasure which my wife's situation gives us is removed. Still, as *I* knew what my words meant, though you did not, I shall not think that in giving you the writership I have done all my duty by you."

"You must do no more, sir; I should hate to receive favours which I cannot repay. Money I cannot pay you back; but if you love me, I can love you again, and even probably love you more than you love me."

"Well, well; I respect your pride: and now let us go tell my wife all you think and feel on this occasion."

Mrs. Fullarton was as well satisfied with Ronald's assurance as her husband had been, and had great pleasure in communicating what had passed to her beloved sister. Mrs. Fullarton, though a sensible woman, was not an accomplished one; as she had been bred up at home,

and in retirement, and her opportunities of improvement had been few. Besides, the man she adored had loved her without accomplishments; therefore she had no motive for endeavouring to acquire them. But her eldest and her youngest sister had been taken from the paternal roof by a lady of quality, their mother's first cousin, and had received from the masters which she provided them, and from the company which she assembled at her house, all the advantages and polish which education can bestow.

Emma Douglas, in an evil hour, had left the roof of this adopted mother, and had accompanied her sister Grace to India; where, as I have before stated, she became the unhappy and ill-treated wife of a Mr. Hatfield; who, though he had long ceased to love her, would not allow her to leave him, even for her health's sake, because he knew that her attractions

alone drew company to his house, and that her presence alone made that house respectable.

Whatever her complaints had been, and whether or not a return to England might have removed them, they had now all settled in a complete paralysis of the lower limbs; but since that crisis took place, her mind seemed to recover all its brilliancy; and conversational powers of a very superior nature drew around the sofa to which she was now confined, all those residents in Calcutta who had taste enough to relish her society, and talent enough to add to its charms. Mrs. Fullarton was well aware, that it would be highly to Ronald's advantage to be a favourite with this accomplished woman, as she well knew, that to a young man who has mind enough to appreciate a woman of superior acquirements, constant intercourse with her is the greatest

possible advantage. Accordingly, Mrs. Fullarton lost no opportunity of interesting Mrs. Hatfield in Ronald's favour, and he became very soon one of her most welcome and constant visitors. The consequence was, that he acquired too great a relish for the intellectual enjoyment which her house afforded him, to feel inclined to partake of the less refined pleasures to which he was tempted elsewhere; and Mrs. Fullarton had the satisfaction of seeing, that the society of her captivating sister not only polished the manners and called forth the mental powers of her *protégé*, but preserved his morals from contamination, and threw a shield over his endangered youth.

I have before said, that Mrs. Fullarton delighted to think that Ronald might possibly be related to her, as his name was Douglas; "as all the *Douglases were related, no doubt*." But she did not

content herself with only thinking this; she also *said* it; and as her words were not accurately repeated, it was soon reported that Mr. Ronald Douglas was Mrs. Fullarton's cousin; and some declared that he was her nephew: while, much to Ronald's vexation, whose love of truth revolted against any deception, however flattering to himself, Mrs. Fullarton used to delight in aiding this belief, by calling him in sport, as she said, "Cousin Ronald."

In vain did he reply, "You do me too much honour, madam." No one heard or noticed this answer; and Ronald was, spite of himself, elevated to the dignity of Mrs. Fullarton's near relation. Nor would his benefactors listen to his expostulations on the subject.

"If you were going to be married, indeed," said Mr. Fullarton, "the case would be different, as on such occasions

no truth must be withheld, or can be by honourable persons; and you must tell all you know concerning yourself."

"What *all?*" cried Mrs. Fullarton.

"Yes, all," replied Ronald; "and my own lowly *calling;* not forgetting," he added, laughing, "the ragged apron I wore when you first saw me. But this communication ought, I think, to be made before I am going to *woo;* for the love might be given to Mrs. Fullarton's cousin, which would have been refused to Ronald Douglas the exciseman's son and the carpenter's apprentice."

"Ronald, you provoke me," cried Mrs. Fullarton, resolutely resisting the appeal of her judgement from her feelings. "However, the girl that would not love you, even if she knew you to be the son of a shoe-black, could not be worthy of you."

"There is a declaration for you, from

one of the blood of the Douglases! After that, Ronald, I am sure you ought to be satisfied," said Mr. Fullarton. Ronald shook his head; and if not satisfied, he was silenced. But the subject was soon renewed on the following occasion.

A Mr. and Mrs. Manvers, residents in Calcutta, determined to give a ball and supper to the governor-general; but as they wished the party to be more select than numerous, and were desirous of filling without crowding their rooms, they resolved to confine their invitations to masters of families and their relations only; as, had they invited all the residents in the family, no private house could have held the company; because it often happens at Calcutta, as well as in other settlements, that gentlemen and ladies invite young persons of both sexes, when they arrive in port, to take up their residence at first under their roof.

Accordingly, the invitations of Mrs. Manvers were to Mr. and Mrs. such an one, and their relations; that to the Fullartons was consequently to them and their relation, *Mr. Douglas*.

"What a fortunate mistake this is for Ronald, my dear!" cried Mrs. Fullarton; "I am told, this ball will be the finest thing ever given in Calcutta; but if he were not supposed to be our relation, he could not go to it, for he would not have been invited."

Mr. Fullarton smiled significantly, and replied, "True: but as he is not our relation, I do not believe Ronald will go. Here he is, give him the card."

Mrs. Fullarton did so.

"Will you answer this card for me?" said Ronald, "or shall I answer it myself?"

"As you please: you go, of course?"

"No—how can I? None but the

relations are, I know, invited; therefore I have no more right to go than the young lady and gentleman who are residing under your roof, as well as myself."

"But you are expressly invited."

"Yes, from an error I am."

"But it is an error so established now as a truth, that there can be no harm in taking advantage of it."

"Pardon me, I cannot go any where on a false pretence; I should know I had no right to be of the party, and that thought would poison all my enjoyment."

"There!" cried Mr. Fullarton, "I *told* you what Ronald would feel."

"And do I not feel right, sir?"

"You do, you do; and so Grace will tell you herself, when her principles have conquered her feelings a little."

"You are a disagreeable, scrupulous person, Ronald," said Mrs. Fullarton: "but I cannot help honouring you; and I see I

must submit, as well as I can, to your provoking decision; so write what you please.

Ronald was going to obey; but suddenly recollecting herself, Mrs. Fullarton said she would write the answer; then, taking her husband's arm, she led him into another apartment. The result of the conference was, a resolution to inform Mr. and Mrs. Manvers of what had passed, of Ronald's honourable resistance to their entreaties that he would accept the invitation, and so on.

"There, my dear Fullarton!" said his warm-hearted wife; "if these people have moral taste enough to appreciate Ronald's conduct, they will keep the secret, and *insist* on his coming."

"Yes, Grace, yes, *if*," replied Mr. Fullarton, who knew the world and people of the world better than she did.

"Is the answer written?" said Ronald, when they returned.

"Yes, and sent too; and it is *all* your primeval and puritanical scrupulosity could have *desired* it to be," replied Mrs. Fullarton, laughing.

But the day passed without Mrs. Fullarton's receiving, as she expected, an answer full of admiration of Ronald's conduct, and desiring him to come at all events. No answer came, and poor Mrs. Fullarton could only say,

"Well! how differently, my dear husband, should you and I have felt and acted!" She was right.

On receiving the note, Mr. and Mrs. Manvers only said, "Well, this is *lucky:* there is one less; and I am so afraid my rooms should be too full. What could people mean, by saying Mr. Douglas was related to the Fullartons?"

It was a consolation to Mrs. Fullarton, under this disappointment, to be able to vent her feelings to her sister, as she

knew that Mrs. Hatfield sympathized with them all; but even she rather displeased Mrs. Fullarton, by saying,

"After all, I dare say, Ronald does not care much about balls."

"Do you mean then to undervalue the merit of what he did?"

"Certainly not: on the contrary, I am sure that to refuse the invitation gave him the sincerest pain; because he knew that it would hurt your feelings, as he is well aware that you have an affectionate pleasure in knowing that he is supposed to be your relation."

"Then would it not have been almost a virtue in Ronald to have gone to the ball, and said nothing on the subject?"

"No; at most, it would only have been an amiable weakness. But Ronald showed in what he did a degree of moral heroism, which is of all others the most difficult to practise. Aye, my dear sister,

a heroism more difficult, I really believe, than to perform the action which recommended him to your favour."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; for his impulse then was of the highest nature, the daring was of the most generous kind, and the *success* would be the acme of virtuous delight."

"And you think Ronald felt this, and anticipated the *gratitude* and the *applause* which followed?"

"No; but, however unconsciously, he must have been governed by motives of this kind: therefore, great as was his self-devotion, it did not necessarily follow, that Ronald must be capable of that heroism which he displayed yesterday."

"Heroism?"

"Yes, I call it so; for there is nothing which requires so much *mental courage*, and so much firm principle, as to be able to tell the strict truth without

being led from it by temptation to *lies of vanity*, of *interest*, of *pride*, or of *complaisance*."

"And why so?"

"Because no *fame*, no *honour* awaits the person who so dares, as there is scarcely an individual in society who values spontaneous truth, or indeed *any* truth. To tell a *little fib*, a *white lie*, is thought even meritorious on some occasions; while a strict adherence to truth, on small as well as great points, exposes the person who so adheres, to be *ridiculed*, if not *despised*, by people in general. Therefore, he who can act up to his own sense of right, in defiance of ridicule and example, and also unstimulated by aught but the whisper of conscience, is capable of what I must call the most difficult MORAL HEROISM."

"My dear Emma, how you charm me!" cried Mrs. Fullarton: "Ronald

would enjoy such a tribute of praise from you—more than fifty balls." Here he is; and now, for curiosity's sake, I will ask him whether he really wished to go to this ball."

"Indeed I did," replied Ronald; "most earnestly did I wish it, as such things are quite new to me; and I love dancing now I can dance without appearing very awkward."

"Then I am mistaken," said Mrs. Hatfield; "I thought you did not care for a ball for its own sake, Ronald; for I forget that I was once young myself, and that my preference for more intellectual pleasures is probably the result of necessity, not of choice. Well, sister, this adds another leaf to our hero's laurel."

Six months after their arrival in India, Mrs. Fullarton gave birth to a daughter; and as the child lived and flourished, Ronald had the satisfaction of seeing his

friends as happy as their virtues deserved.

Ronald was soon enabled by the assistance of Mr. Fullarton, who thoroughly understood business, to make two or three successful speculations; and there was no one in Calcutta who was judged more likely to make a fortune than Ronald Douglas. Whatever had been his causes for complaint against his parents, Ronald was too good a son to mention them even to the Fullartons, otherwise than with affection and interest: and ill befall the child who can dare with unhallowed hand to point out to reprobation and notice the errors and infirmities of a parent!

His first letters to England were accompanied by presents, which he knew only too well would be more welcome than the letters themselves; but it was Mrs. Fullarton who provided them, as

he could not yet make presents. As soon, however, as he had realized a sum of money, he showed his sense of his friend the carpenter's kindness, by sending him what he thought an equivalent; and when he had remitted money for the use of his parents, he also remembered his old master Norton.

Precious to Ronald's heart were the letters which he received from England in return for his presents: those from the good Norton were certainly affectionate, but so he expected that they would be. His anticipations of letters from his own family had not been so highly raised. It was therefore a most welcome surprise to him to find not only gratitude but affection in his mother's as well as in his father's letter, though he could not but smile more in sadness than in mirth at one characteristic and consistent trait in that of the former; for after telling him she could not decide

whether the shawl cravat he sent his father or that to John was the prettiest, she added, "But I let John *wear both*; so sometimes he goes out in one, and sometimes in the other; but don't tell your father so when you write, for he *does not know it*, as he is so careful of his!" But dearer,—perhaps, because wholly unexpected, written also with seeming affection, and with apologies for past unkindness,—was a letter from his brother: and Ronald in a transport of joy flew to his benefactors, exclaiming "Only think; John too has written to me, and written kindly!"

His friends tried to rejoice with him; but they could not do so with sincerity, though they would not damp his affectionate joy by telling him that they believed John only wrote to him in order to give himself a chance of profiting by his prosperity. But Ronald's nature was not

formed for distrust: believing that absence had softened his brother's heart in his favour, his home came over his recollection in brighter and dearer hues than he had ever beheld it in before; nor could he help exclaiming, "Well, this is indeed one of the happiest days of my life!" Alas! it is painful to reflect how often we owe the enjoyment of our happiest days to *imagination* and *illusion*."

I shall pass rapidly over the next year of the life of my hero, during which he acquired a considerable fortune, and received frequent and kind letters from his brother John, who became his sole correspondent at last, as his mother, he told him, was threatened with blindness, and his father had sprained his right hand. This was a severe mortification to Ronald.

The little Grace Fullarton, the darling of her parents, and the happy pet of her aunt and Ronald, grew in the mean while

in beauty and intellect. It has been observed that children born in India have a peculiar precocity and quickness of talent, and this child more than confirmed this observation; nay, so great was the readiness with which she learnt the Latin grammar, under Ronald's instructions, and music, drawing, French, and Italian from her aunt, that her fond parents hoped there would be no necessity to send her to England for education: but at eight years old her health became evidently affected by the climate, and they were forced to send her to the care of her eldest aunt, Miss Douglas, who resided in London. Mr. Fullarton had generosity enough to insist on his wife's accompanying his child to England. But she refused to go, assuring him that, dear as Grace was, he was still dearer; nor while he, faithful to his promise, remained to watch over and cheer the hours of her

slowly declining sister, would she forsake the post of duty either, but would submit patiently to a separation from her daughter. Accordingly, under the best possible care, and at the most favourable season, Grace Fullarton sailed for England, and arrived in safety at the house of her aunt. This lady had been left by the noble relation with whom she lived, a handsome fortune, and she now resided by herself in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square. It was not the intention of Miss Douglas to send her niece to boarding-school, especially when she found her education so well begun, but she chose that she should have masters at home. However, when Grace was thirteen, Mrs. Fullarton was prevailed upon to let her daughter follow the fashion of other persons' daughters, and to send her, at an enormous expense, to an establishment where the education of young ladies

was what is called *finished*, and the last polish given to their manners.

Miss Douglas obeyed these orders, though it was most reluctantly, and Grace was sent to the lady who had been recommended to her sister. Nor did her aversion to this plan diminish when she found that her niece imbibed in this new situation very high ideas of her own consequence as the heiress of Mr. Fullarton, whose estates were known to be very great, as well as his personal property; and this empty pride it had been her aunt's study to discourage as much as possible. But now, all that her prudence had done, the governess and Grace's companions had entirely counteracted; and she feared that the simplicity and modesty of her niece's character and manner, which used to remind her of her sister Mrs. Hatfield, would be entirely destroyed by the pernicious flattery lavished on the heiress, who was ena-

bled by her munificent parents to indulge her natural generosity by giving presents to her governess and her friends.

Fortunately, however, in one respect as Miss Douglas thought, a circumstance took place, which, by diminishing her niece's expectations, also diminished her consequence, and furnished her with a pretext for taking Grace from this focus of pride and expense when she had been there a twelvemonth.

Mr. Fullarton was only a younger son; but he succeeded to his estates in Scotland by the death of his father, as his elder brother had died abroad, and died, as was supposed, without an heir: but it was now ascertained beyond the power of doubt, that his brother had married the woman with whom he lived; and therefore, according to the law of Scotland, the son was entitled to his father's estates. Some circumstances not worth detailing

had hitherto prevented the claims of the widow and the child from being brought forward; but now the most able lawyers declared those claims were indisputable, and the young heiress was divested of some of her adventitious splendours. With them, much to her surprise and even to her great distress, she lost a considerable portion of the attention and the flatteries of her governess and her companions, as they fancied her pretensions to be a great heiress were wholly gone; and two only out of the twenty who had sworn to her eternal friendship declared that she was as dear to them as ever. Therefore, when her aunt came to remove her from this now painful situation, her young heart was almost breaking with this first proof of the hollowness of professions; and it was some time before Miss Douglas could convince her, that the salutary lesson which she had

thus painfully acquired was of more worth than the estates which she had lost.

"Oh! it is not the loss of wealth," replied the weeping girl, "which affects me: it is the discovery that I was loved merely on account of my father's consequence, and not on account of——"

"Of your own merit, my dear; I will finish the sentence for you. Well, then, you must be more circumspect in forming your future friendships, and choose those only for your friends, whose qualities are such as to convince you they are capable of loving you for yourself alone."

"Oh, how angry, and how surprised too, my own dear Ronald Douglas will be, when he hears of the insincerity of the girls concerning whom I have written to him in such raptures!"

"You do not doubt the sincerity of Ronald's friendship, then?"

"Doubt of that! No. If all the rest

of the world be false, I am sure Ronald would ever remain the soul of honour and of truth."

"There I believe you are right, my dear girl; and happy is the woman who has a real friend of the other sex."

Ronald, meanwhile, was becoming very rich, very popular, but very anxious. His wealth and his popularity made him thought one of the best matches in Calcutta; and he certainly could have always had his choice of *the market*. But it was evident to him that his friends the Fullartons did not wish him to marry; and as his own heart was wholly unmoved by the variety of objects which were presented to his view, he resolved at present to remain a bachelor, unless, during the visit which he was about to make to England, he should see a woman whom he could love, and the disinterestedness of whose attachment he could

not doubt. Indeed the poor declining Emma Hatfield threw a sort of shield over his affections, which defended them from others; for where could he meet with a woman who united the charms of face, of mind, of heart, and of manners, to the degree that she did? and till he did meet a being who resembled her, he firmly believed that he could never love.

Yes—Ronald had resolved to visit England, though his heart bled at the thoughts of leaving this beloved friend. But then he was willing to spare himself the misery of seeing her die, and he also felt that a nearer duty called him to his native country; for he had not heard from his home, or even from England, for more than two years; and he feared that something had happened to his father and mother, if not to John. He now, too, recollected only too often, what he had for-

gotten while John wrote, and wrote so kindly to him, namely, that old Norton had said in his letter, that he feared his brother was doing *very ungainly*, and was a great trial to his father.

At this time too his health gave way, and he was ordered to try the air of England: therefore he could not remain where he was.

Accordingly, after a parting of the most affecting nature with Mrs. Hatfield, uncheered by the hope of seeing her again, and one of a more cheerful nature with the Fullartons, as they were pleased to think he would see their daughter, and that she would see him, and also that when he returned he would be accompanied by her, he set off for England.

Ronald carried with him a letter to young Fullarton from his uncle, worthy of the generous and affectionate heart of the writer.

"There is always good coming out of evil, my dear Grace," said Mr. Fullarton. "We have lamented that Hatfield would not let us take Emma to England, and therefore obliged us to stay here. But now, this loss of the estates would have obliged me to return, as my personal property would not have been sufficient for us to live as we have been accustomed to live, and give Grace a handsome marriage portion. Now, however, when we are able and willing to quit India finally, my fortune will still be equal to my most ambitious wishes."

At length Ronald Douglas landed in England after sixteen years of absence, and found himself once more in the streets of the metropolis. But as he arrived in the summer, and the air of the metropolis was hot and oppressive, he determined to hire a villa a few miles off, while he was forced to remain near London to transact business.

His first visit was to the daughter of his benefactors, to that engaging child whom he had loved from the hour of her birth, and whose quick talents and sweet temper had endeared her still more to his heart.

Grace, meanwhile, was counting the hours till Ronald arrived in England. For, dearly as she had loved him when she was a child, her affection for him had increased with her esteem, and she was now old enough to appreciate his character.

Nor was Miss Douglas slow to join in her niece's enthusiastic admiration of Ronald: on the contrary, she encouraged her partiality to the utmost of her power, and was as openly impatient for Ronald's appearance as Grace herself could be.

At last, after rather a faint and unpromising knock at the door,—for Ronald felt some flutter at the idea of being reunited to the darling child of his affections,

the servant announced Mr. Ronald Douglas; and Grace was bounding into the ante-room to meet him with open arms, when a feeling of unexpected timidity came over her, and she stopped at the door.

It seemed as if Ronald on his side had intended meeting her in a different manner; for his rapid step paused when he saw her, and he started back with evident emotion, while the kiss which he had designed for her cheek was respectfully imprinted on her hand.

"Is it possible? Can this tall, fine young woman be my own little Grace?" cried Ronald, after the first flutter of meeting had been recovered on both sides.

"Yes," replied Miss Douglas; "and you will find her your own little Grace still,—only that she is become a lady of great experience; and out of *twenty professed friends*, she has found only *two* sincere and faithful."

This led to a discussion of poor Grace's little injuries; while she assured the sympathizing Ronald that she had quite recovered the blow, and forgiven the offenders; being of opinion that the young woman who is almost *seventeen* should not resent the wrongs of the girl of *fourteen*.

"*Seventeen!* Are you no more, Miss Fullarton?" said Ronald gravely.

"I will be only seven again if you call me Miss Fullarton," replied Grace, her eyes filling with tears.

"Well, *Grace* then, *dear* Grace," he answered, taking her hand.

Ronald passed the whole of that day with the aunt and the niece. The next day they went with him to hire a villa near town which had been recommended to him; and for one whole week in succession, whatever was his business, Ro-

nald dined or spent his evenings with Miss Douglas and Grace.

"This will not do," said he to himself at last. "I must set off for Westmorland: I must not neglect my duty thus; nor indeed, if I am wise, shall I expose myself any longer to the danger of being with this fascinating girl. My benefactor's heiress! Then that likeness to her aunt! *I* take her back to India! *I* go in the same ship with her! Never, never."

After a hurried farewell, Ronald set off for his native village, having commissioned Miss Douglas to hire servants for him, and give orders for his house to be gotten ready against his return.

Ronald travelled rapidly till he came to an inn which he well remembered, that was only a few miles distant from his native place. To this inn he had previously sent his riding-horse. He then

mounted, and while the sun was still high in the heavens he set off unattended for the village of L——. As soon as he caught the first glimpse of the well-known spire with its golden fane glittering in the sun-beams, while the village lay green yet dark in the still vale below, he stopped in his rapid career to take breath, to think, and to *feel*.

"In ten minutes more I shall be there," said Ronald to himself, "and I shall know the fate of my parents. My dear old master too! Will *he* be alive to welcome me? And the poor men whom I saved! Oh, how glad will they be to see me! I hope they are living."

Slowly did he make his horse go as he thus thought and felt, while the recollections of days that were gone came mournfully over his soul. At length, feeling his spirits becoming painfully de-

pressed, he put spurs to his horse, and soon found himself in the village.

The first well-remembered object was the school-room, the door of which was broken off its hinges, and told a melancholy tale of utter disuse.

"My poor old friend!" thought Ronald, "I doubt you are no more!"

The next object was an old friend with a new face, for it was the house of the other Norton, the carpenter; with smart sash-windows replacing the ancient casements, and the whole place wearing an air of neatness and comfort, the result of increased opulence. Ronald felt a sort of sob of pleasure in his throat as he saw this, for he trusted that *he* had contributed to this change; but on he went, for he was eager to arrive at the door of his own home. He did reach it, or rather what was once that home; for the modest

tenement which he had left on that spot was now converted into a handsome red brick mansion, and bespoke such wealth in its possessor as could not as yet belong to the parents of Ronald. A high wall now inclosed the well-remembered garden; and his heart beat even to agony as the fear came over his mind, that his *tree*, that dear willow-tree under which he used to conceal his early sorrows, that tree under which he lay when the beaming countenance of his benefactors first met his eye, had been cut down during this season of alteration, and that his wish to lie under it once more, and there lift his soul in humble gratitude to heaven, could never, never be gratified.

"But perhaps it is *not* down!" and he stood on his saddle, trying to look over the wall. It was all in vain; some Lombardy poplars still towered above him, and interrupted his view.

"Pshaw!" cried Ronald pettishly, "I always hated Lombardy poplars:" and he turned his horse away.

"So then, THEY are not there!" cried Ronald, sighing deeply: "then where are they? In their graves perhaps. Shall I seek them there? Shall I go to the church-yard? No, no, I dare not:" and while considering what he should do, he continued to ride slowly through the village.

But Ronald was not quite well when he began his journey; and as the agitation of his mind had not tended to make him better, he was now conscious of great exhaustion; and feeling rather faint, he beckoned to a little girl who had a milk-pail on her arm, and was entering a cottage-door. While she drew near, Ronald took off his hat to wipe the damps of fatigue from his brow; and as he stooped to speak to the girl, and, getting off his

horse, requested a draught of her new milk, he was unconscious that he was surveyed with the most scrutinizing attention by a middle-aged woman at the cottage-door. But the moment he spoke, the woman bounded forward exclaiming,

"Oh! 'tis Ronald! I am sure 'tis Ronald!"

"Ronald!" cried the girl, and she ran away to tell every one she saw that Ronald was come; while her delighted mother, the wife of one of the men whom he had saved, wiped down her best chair, and then shouted out to her husband in the field, that Ronald Douglas was come.

It seemed as if the grateful people had taught the name of Ronald to lisping infancy, and taught it also to bless it; for a little curly-pated girl looked up in his face and said, "Is ou Onald? den me *tiss*

ou!" and in a moment she was on his knee, and fondling him as if she knew him.

The cottage was now thronged; and the men whom he had saved, with their wives, children, and neighbours, all came to welcome and shake hands with this tenderly-remembered friend. Ronald's heart was too full to speak; but joy made the others garrulous, especially the woman who had first seen and recognised him.

"I wonder you knew me, Sarah," said he.

"Know you! do you think I could ever forget you? But when you spoke, oh! then I was sure it was you; that kind voice, and yet so mournful too!"

Ronald sighed deeply, and then said,

"Where are my poor father and mother?"

At first, no one spoke; but seeing his

evident agony, one of the men hastened to reply, "We cannot tell you; they left this place two years ago with your brother John, and we have neither heard nor seen any thing of them since."

"Thank God! then you do not *know* they are no more?"

At this moment James Norton entered the cottage, and welcomed Ronald with a faltering voice and quivering lip.

"Where is your brother?"

"Alive, and *sensible*, but speechless, and has lost the use of his limbs."

"Will he know me?"

"Oh, yes! and be so glad to see you!"

"That is another comfort. But tell me, do *you* know any thing of my parents?"

"They are alive, I believe."

"But where are they?"

"I can't tell; a relation of ours lives near the house to which John took them, and she told us that John carried a wo-

man home whom he called his wife; but that your father found out she was infamous, and he reproached John for bringing his mother such a companion; on which the unnatural son turned both him and your mother out of doors, and nothing has been heard of them since."

"Horrible!" cried Ronald. "But I shall go to John directly, and demand to know where they are."

"You must find him first; for he is gone no one knows where; and there are sad stories about him."

"Indeed! but however, my poor parents cannot be in want, wherever they are."

Another dead silence, which was broken only by tidings of the most afflicting nature.

The money which Ronald remitted for the benefit of his parents did not minister to their comfort long, for it only induced John to launch out into greater

extravagance; and again and again his father had to exhaust his finances entirely to save him from a gaol. But as Ronald continued to write and to send remittances, though they did not rise, they did not sink in the world. Still, they had not the heart to write to him; for they could not bear to complain of his brother, and yet they hardly knew how to write without betraying the melancholy truth. They therefore gladly allowed John to write for them. But at length they ceased to receive either letters or money from Ronald.

When James Norton got to this part of his narrative, Ronald eagerly interrupted him; declaring that he wrote letters and sent money to them *twice every year*.

"Then John intercepted both."

"Letters he might, but surely not remittances."

"Why not? Your father's name is John Douglas, as well as your brother's, and no doubt he was up to any thing. For my part," said Norton, "I always suspected there was some foul play; for I was sure that you would not neglect your parents."

"And did they think I neglected them?"

"They could not think otherwise; but then, poor things! they blamed themselves, not *you*, and said you had already done more for them than they deserved from you."

"Did they say so? I will find them if I travel over England on foot to do it. But, go on."

He did so; and Ronald learnt, that owing to John's villany, his father lost at last his place of exciseman; for it was discovered that John was connected with a gang of smugglers, and that he had as-

sisted them to make the garden a deposit for their goods; that in consequence of some secret information, officers had examined the premises, and found a large cargo of contraband commodities. It was in vain that the poor old man declared his entire innocence: his place was taken from him, his reputation destroyed; and hating to look in the face of his old neighbours and associates, he gladly consented to accompany his unworthy son to the obscurity of the metropolis.

Indeed, though neither Ronald nor his neighbours knew it, he had no other alternative, for John had money, whatever might be the means by which he gained it; and till Mr. Douglas could receive a letter from Ronald, to whom he at last wrote, taking the precaution to carry the letter to the India-House himself and pay the necessary postage, he was forced to submit to be maintained by John.

These last particulars Ronald did not learn till afterwards; all he knew was, that his parents were turned out of doors by his brother, and were probably without any means of procuring a livelihood.

"Well, then, I know my duty," said Ronald, "and I will perform it. It is most likely that John will go to the post-office as usual for letters when the next fleet comes in, and I will take care to have him watched and then kept in custody till I have seen and interrogated him. But let me try to turn to pleasanter things."

Ronald now gratified the three cottagers by showing them the prayer-book which they had given him: then he took out of his pocket-book a paper containing the flowers which their children gave him as he passed through the village.

"Which of you gave them to me?" said Ronald.

"It was I, and I, and I," eagerly exclaimed two fine young women and a young man near him; "but we will give you some better now: throw away that trumpery." And away they ran to cull for him the best of their gardens.

Ronald smiled mournfully to think how little his feelings were understood, and carefully put the dried flowers back into their case; for to *him* they were certainly not trumpery. He however complaisantly waited for the promised flowers, then taking James Norton's arm, accompanied him to his house.

"Who lives in our house?" said Ronald as he passed the well-known gate.

"A stranger; one Mr. Benson: a good kind of man, and well to do in the world."

"So his alterations seem to show; but I wish he had not done so much to the garden, for I am so disappointed. I did

so wish to lie under my favourite tree once more; but I conclude it is down."

"No, no," replied Norton with great emphasis. "No: we knew how much you loved that tree, and we thought you would be sorry it should be destroyed; and so we made it our business, the three cottagers, my brother, and myself, to go to Mr. Benson about it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why we went, and told him the story of you, the men, and the tree. My *brother* was chief spokesman; and we said we did so wish that he would let that tree stand for your sake, and because you *loved* it, and would like to see it again."

"Thank you! God bless you!" cried Ronald. "Well, and did he spare it?"

"Oh, yes! and seemed so pleased! He said he would call it the good Ronald's tree, and teach his children to

respect it for the good young man's sake."

"I will go and thank him to-morrow."

"Well," said he to himself, "at least there are many sweet and precious drops mingled in the bitter cup that awaited me here."

They had now reached Norton's house, part of which had been appropriated to the use of the elder Norton, ever since the poor old man had had a stroke of the palsy. Ronald's heart died within him as the meeting with the poor paralytic approached; for he dreaded to see the conscious helplessness, the frequent tears, the involuntary sobs, the fruitless endeavours to articulate, which are so affecting in patients of this description.

"I should like to see whether my poor brother will know your voice," said James Norton; "I will go in and watch his

countenance while you stand behind him and speak to my wife."

"As you please," answered Ronald, and followed where he led.

The good old man was sitting up in an easy chair, neatly dressed in a cloth wrapping gown, and every thing about him bore the marks of cleanliness and comfort. The door of his room opened into a pretty garden, and the fragrance of the flowers gave freshness and sweetness to the apartment.

"I am glad to see you so well, Mrs. Norton," said Ronald.

The invalid started, looked round with eager anxiety, but saw nothing, and burst into tears. His brother motioned to him to speak again.

"What a pleasant room this is! and how glad I am to find my good old friend so comfortably situated!"

Ronald could say no more; for that good old friend was now certain Ronald was near, and he tried though vainly to rise from his seat to look for him, while his emotions were painful to behold. Ronald now rushed forward and stood before him.

The next moment he supported the delighted but agitated old man, exhausted, against his bosom. When he recovered, he made signs to Ronald to kneel down. He did so. He then lifted up his eyes in prayer, and put his hand on his head, as if giving him his blessing.

"Thank you, thank you, my dear friend!" said he, rising: "your blessing is a gift that I truly value."

As he said this, the old man's eyes lighted up with a peculiar meaning, and a smile played about his features. He then took a key out of his pocket, and gave it to his sister-in-law.

"I understand," said she—and going to a small cabinet, she took out of it the Horace, which Mrs. Fullarton had sent him.

He then gave it to Ronald, and made signs that he should put it in his pocket, —showing him first what was written on the blank leaf.

"If I die before Ronald Douglas returns, give him this, to keep in remembrance of his loving friend, Robert Norton."

"How I shall value it!" cried Ronald, pressing it to his lips; and the delighted invalid wept out his joy.

Hitherto such was the simplicity of Ronald's dress and manners, that every one had been able to forget in the joy of seeing him, that he was now raised above them, and that he was become a *gentleman*.

But by this time Ronald's groom ar-

rived on another horse, and was soon followed by his master's chariot drawn by post-horses, while the servants desired to know where Mr. Douglas lived.

"Not here now," was the answer; and the servants did not know what to do, when Ronald came out and directed them to an inn.

"So then, these servants and that carriage are Mr. RONALD's," said one to the other.

At last the arrival of *Mr. Douglas* reached the ears of the rector. The clergyman who possessed the living when Ronald went away had resigned it for a better; but the present incumbent was well acquainted with his story, and he civilly sent to offer Mr. Douglas a bed at the rectory; but he preferred sleeping at James Norton's, especially as the invalid was delighted to think that *Ronald Douglas* was to sleep under his roof.

Before the good man went to rest, Ronald unpacked his portmanteau, and took out of it a cap made of shawl, which he had brought for his father, who usually replaced his wig with a cap at home. But as Norton did the same, and his father was not there, he gave it to the former. Ronald was gratified and affected, to see the satisfaction which lighted up the old man's usually rayless eye as he looked in the glass and fitted it on his head. Nor would he allow the cap to be put out of his sight when he went to bed, but had it placed where his eyes could behold it on waking.

Perhaps it *was* the first object he beheld on waking—perhaps it was also the *last* he ever gazed on; and that kind and grateful recollections of his *beloved pupil* were uppermost even in his *closing sigh*. For, certain it is, that when his brother went to call him in the morning, he found him *seemingly asleep*, so placid and

pleasing was his countenance; but on a nearer approach, he found that his *sleep* was that of DEATH.

Ronald could not help imputing this sudden dissolution to the agitation occasioned by seeing him. Still, though shocked and distressed, he was *comforted;* for a life of helplessness and privation had terminated in feelings of pleasure; and his last consciousness had undoubtedly been one of *satisfied affection.*

This event detained him a few days in the village, as he wished to pay the good old man the last tribute of respect, and also by so doing to gratify his survivors. But heavily moved these days to Ronald Douglas; for, after the first pleasing emotions of seeing his native place and of being cordially welcomed to it had subsided, he felt the want of companions such as he was now accustomed to, and he for ever relinquished the wish he had once

indulged in of settling in his native village. "No, kind and grateful beings!" thought he, "I will be your friend and your benefactor, but not your neighbour and your associate; and so fades away for ever one of the dreams of my youth!"

Ronald received a visit the day after his arrival from the Mr. Benson who occupied his father's house, and was courteously invited by him to go and visit the old tree. This offer he thankfully accepted, and Mr. Benson had delicacy enough to let him *visit it alone*.

When Ronald returned to the house, the voice was faltering with which he thanked Mr. Benson for having preserved the tree, and for the opportunity of revisiting it which he had now afforded him.

"Come every day and visit it," cried the good man; "and all I ask of you is to engrave on its bark the revered and beloved name of Ronald Douglas."

To beguile the time which intervened before the funeral took place, Ronald wrote a long account of his reception at L——, and of his disappointments, his sorrows, and his gratifications. But to whom was he to address it? His heart said, to Grace Fullarton; but his judgement to her aunt: and the latter carried the day. Still, though he thought he had effaced every word which would have betrayed that it was of Grace he thought while he wrote, he still left in the letter the words *sweet young friend;* and Miss Douglas laughed at the discovery this expression made.

"Only think, my dear Grace," said she, while reading the letter, "Mr. Douglas calls me his *sweet young friend!* Did you think he had been such a flatterer?"

"He a flatterer! No, indeed; it is a mistake; he did not mean you, dear aunt."

"Then whom *did* he mean, Grace? He was writing to me."

"Yes, but—"

"But he was thinking of you, I suppose, is your modest inference."

"I hope he was, for I am sure I do not wish him to have any *other* sweet young friend."

The day was a welcome one to Ronald which conveyed the remains of his respected friend to the grave, because it set him at liberty to return to dearer society, and also to take measures for tracing, if possible, his unfortunate parents.

He had a pleasure in making the good schoolmaster's funeral as handsome as was consistent with propriety; and the brother was thankful indeed to Ronald, for having done all in his power to honour the kind and harmless being whom he had loved as a relation, and whom he had been proud of as the *scholar of the family*.

"This last kindness of yours," said he as he wrung Ronald's hand at parting, "I feel, somehow more, I think, than any other; and God bless you, and if possible, make you happy with your parents!"

"Amen," cried Ronald, as he sprung into his carriage, and drove along the village.—Again, but not in like manner as when he first left his home, did the cottagers come out to bid him farewell.

He had left with them such large tokens of his bounty, and his carriage, his *own carriage*, was so handsome, and so completely bespoke the gentleman, that respect was now mingled with their love, and they feared to treat him with their former familiarity. But Ronald's hand was as kindly tendered to them as before, the parting tribute of flowers was as gratefully received. Still, they felt he was no longer their equal only, and their blessings were given not to "Ronald," but to

"*Mr. Douglas*," not to their *friend*, but to their *benefactor*.

"Alas!" cried Ronald, "they will never welcome me as heartily on my second as they did on my first visit;" and he regretted for a moment that they would *never call him Ronald again*.

Ronald was so impatient to get to London, that he only stopped on the road one night, and he drove to the house of Miss Douglas as soon as he reached the metropolis; but heard to his great surprise, that she and her niece were gone to a country house near Southgate.

"Near Southgate! Was it possible they were gone to *his* house, then?"

His house was on the borders of Enfield Chase, he having preferred that side of London as being more convenient for transacting his city business.

When Ronald arrived at his own house, he eagerly inquired for Miss Douglas and

Miss Fullarton, but found that they were in a house of their own, which they had hired since his departure, and which was only half a mile distant.

"So near me!" said Ronald mentally, sighing as he spoke.

Ronald was affectionately welcomed by both aunt and niece; and he was provoked with himself when he found that he could not be as unembarrassed as they were.

"You cannot think, Mr. Douglas," said the aunt, "what difficulty I have had in keeping my niece at home; she wanted to set off for L——, merely to thank and to see the nicely feeling men who petitioned the new comer to save your tree. As for the tree itself, of that she wants to have a drawing: can you give her one?"

"Dear, enthusiastic girl!" cried Ronald, "would I could! I wish you had

come to L——; I could not have been more surprised than I am to find you at Southgate."

"Really! You will think we *haunt* you; but I must own that we came hither on purpose to be near you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Pray, aunt, speak for yourself," cried Grace, deeply blushing, "and do not say *we*. I assure you, Mr. Douglas, I had no share in hiring this house; it was all my aunt's doing."

Ronald felt hurt at her denying so eagerly any participation in her aunt's desire of being near him, and turning round was going to answer her in a tone of pique; but when he saw her blushes, her conscious downcast eye, and the extreme confusion of her countenance and manner, a hope, a suspicion, a consciousness, which he had never dared to entertain

before, took possession of his mind; and tenderly taking her hand, as he bent over her averted face, he said in a low impressive tone, "But I hope, though you did not hire the house, you were pleased when it was hired?"

"To be sure she was," cried her aunt. "I read her wishes; and know that in coming hither I obliged her full as much as I did myself."

"O fie, dear aunt!" said Grace; but she said no more, and her eyes fell beneath the glance of Ronald: but he soon put a check upon his looks and feelings, and with a deep sigh changed the conversation.

"You are looking better than when you left us," said Miss Douglas.

"Indeed! It is surprising to me that any one knew me, for I think I am grown a very ugly old fellow."

"You must say this in hopes of being

contradicted; for I should have known you any where, spite of climate and indisposition: not that I mean to say, that a man of four-and-thirty can look like a youth of sixteen."

"*Am* I four-and-thirty?" said Ronald, starting—"True, so I am, I declare. Yes, Miss Fullarton, yes, I was *seventeen* the day you were born. Well do I remember that day, and I hope and trust I shall never *forget* it."

Grace was now called out of the room, and Miss Douglas said, "I hope you will be able to take Grace out to India in a year from this time; for, as I must part with her, I wish the pang was over, as the longer she stays with me, the more cruel will the separation be."

"*I*—*I* take her out to India!—Oh! no, excuse me, I have no such intention."

"No! Why my sister expects you to do so, whether Grace be married or single."

"Married, ma'am! Is Miss Fullarton going to be married?"

"No, sir, not that I know of."

"Well, I can only say, that married or single, she will not go with *me* to India."

"And why not?"

"Why not? Though I *am four-and-thirty*, madam, I am not a *stock* or a stone; and to go in the same ship with a creature whom it is not safe for me to approach on shore! O Miss Douglas! how *can* you wish me to face such danger, and meet with such destruction?"

Grace now returned, and Miss Douglas was kind enough to drop the subject.

The next day and the day after, Ronald did not call on the ladies, as he was resolved to struggle with what he thought a dishonourable passion in him, since its object was the heiress of his benefactors; but on the third day he went to them in

the evening. Miss Douglas received him kindly, but openly reproached him with his long absence; but Grace looked dejected, and uttered not one reproach; and there was something in the softened, saddened tone of her voice which went to his heart, and made him scarcely know what he said. Miss Douglas restored him to himself, however, by asking him if he had heard aught of his parents or his brother. He had not; but he said that he had taken every possible step to discover the latter, and that, he hoped, would lead to a discovery of the former.

"You will, I hope, dine with us tomorrow?" said Miss Douglas.

But Ronald was engaged: he was going to dine and spend the night at the house of a gentleman who lived in Surry.

Accordingly, Ronald set off for Surry; and spite of his hopeless attachment, and of his anxiety concerning his parents, he

could not help being attracted by the variety of the external objects which he saw on the road, especially as these objects told a striking tale of the opulence of London and its environs. Nay, Ronald wondered where London would end and country begin: nor was it till he had driven round Clapham Common, and entered a green lane, where there was a grassy bank, shady trees, and no houses, that he felt he was beginning to breathe the air of the country.

The postillion now took advantage of a gentle rising which could scarcely be called a hill, to walk his horses, and Ronald was on the point of giving way to a disposition to sleep, when his attention was arrested by the sight of two persons sitting on the bank, one of which, a fine old man with an erect person, but silver hair, got up as the carriage approached, and, stepping from the bank, held out his

hat and asked charity for his poor blind wife and for himself!

To the voice of distress Ronald was never deaf, and there was something in the tone of this which thrilled to his very soul. He let down the glass, he gazed on the old man, who was now close to the carriage door; then hastily bidding the postillion stop, he opened the door, sprung upon the neck of the beggar,—and "Oh, my father, my dear father!" burst from his quivering lips.

The poor old man, overcome with surprise, stood motionless and speechless; but the ear of his mother, made more quick by the loss of sight, instantly recognised the voice of her child, and she screamed out "'Tis Ronald, I am sure it is Ronald. Oh, guide me to him!"

Ronald now released his agitated father from his arms, and clasped to his bosom his sightless parent. But oh, with what

agony did he gaze on their threadbare apparel, and the misery which their appearance as well as their calling displayed! "But come," cried he recollecting himself, "get into the carriage; I have found you now, and never will I part with you again."

"Where are you putting me?" cried the poor woman. "Do not take me from Ronald."

"No, you are going with him, my dear mother."

"Indeed! Oh, any where with you, Ronald! We have now no friend besides, and we thought *you* too had forgotten us."

The postillion, who was a wondering spectator of this scene, now desired to know whither he was to drive.

"Back to where you took me up;" and he drove on.

"Where is that, my child?" asked Mr. Douglas.

"To my house."

"*Your* house! Oh, do not let us appear in this mean garb before your servants. If you are not ashamed of *us*, *we* should be ashamed to disgrace *you*."

"Oh, no, Ronald, dear! pray do not take me any where in this trim; I should die with shame; I cannot be seen and known *thus* as your mother, Ronald."

"You shall be seen, and honoured too, as my mother," replied Ronald; "but if it would give you pain to be seen in this dress, let us go to *your* home, and you shall wait there till I have provided you with clothes."

"O Ronald! we have *no* home now, none whatever; we were forced to leave our lodging, miserable as it was, this morning, and we have been walking about for hours; and but for meeting you—" Here he paused, and Ronald wept in company with his unhappy parents.

"Well, then," said he at length, "we will stop at the first decent lodging we see near Westminster-bridge;" and it was not long before "Lodgings to let on a ground-floor" met their sight, and seemed far more than sufficiently good for the accommodation of the indigent couple.

Ronald got out, and told the mistress of the house that he had met by accident two near and dear relations, who had been cruelly deprived of their little property, and they must remain here till he could take them to his house.

The landlady promised them the kindest attendance; and Ronald did not leave them till he had partaken with them of a comfortable dinner, and seen them lodged in as comfortable a bed.

"I now go," said he, "to order every thing necessary for your comfort; and

when your wardrobe is ready, you shall remove to my house."

The poor old people were still too overcome with surprise and joy, to feel as if they were otherwise than in a dream; but they had heard, they had embraced, and the old man had *seen* Ronald; and blessing him repeatedly, and praying for blessings on him, the exhausted couple fell asleep, and forgot not only their sorrows, but their prospects of happiness.

Ronald, when he quitted them, drove to the nearest livery-stable in London, left his carriage there, and paid off his postillion, as he did not like to give him an opportunity of describing to his servants the scene which he had witnessed. He then procured fresh horses, and drove to Southgate.

"I have found them! I have found my poor father and mother," cried Ronald,

as he entered the room; and his auditors sympathized with his emotion.

He then told them that his parents refused to come home to him till they were properly dressed; and Miss Douglas instantly consented to drive with him to warehouses for ready-made clothes and linen.

Grace insisted on accompanying them; and Ronald felt a secret pleasure, the extent of which was not known even to *himself*, in seeing the object of his fond idolatry busied in choosing apparel for his *poor blind mother*.

When the purchases were made, Ronald mounted his horse, which he had desired should follow him; and while the ladies returned to Southgate, he galloped to the lodgings where he had left his parents.

Their friendly landlady told him they were awake, and she had just sent them

up some tea. Ronald, therefore, knowing he should not disturb them, went to their apartment, and, on opening the door, asked if he might come in.

"'Tis Ronald's voice!" cried his mother. "Come in? Aye, to be sure;—only too glad to see—No, no! I cannot see you, but I hear you, and that is more than I deserve."

His father did not speak; but he grasped his hand, and welcomed him with such a look of grateful affection!

"We have had such a sweet, refreshing sleep, my child!" said his mother. "I dreamt I had seen an angel, and that he spoke so kindly to me; and that angel must have been *you*, Ronald."

"You want more tea; shall I order some?"

He did so; and when it was brought, he insisted on holding it himself to his mother's lips. But pushing away his

hand, she cried out, in a sort of hysterical agony,

"No, no; I cannot bear such goodness. The tea will choke me if you give it to me;" and he had too much delicacy not to desist directly.

Ronald now assured them that some of their apparel would be ready during the course of the next day, and would be sent to them.

"In the evening, therefore," he added, "I shall come and conduct you to my house."

Blessed that night were the slumbers of the pious son, as well as of the grateful parents.

When Ronald went the next evening to take them to his home, he was painfully affected to see the childish delight which his mother expressed at *feeling* herself dressed in a manner far beyond what she ever was before, and her regret

at not being able to see her finery. She was as much delighted at finding herself in her son's *own carriage;* and when she reached the house, she insisted on being led round the drawing-room, that she might feel the furniture, while exclamations of pleasure and affection towards Ronald were continually bursting from her lips. But he was far more affected by his father's expressive silence, and the looks of deep feeling with which he ever and anon regarded him.

"My son!" said he at length, "did I not tell you that the blessing of the Almighty would go with you wherever you went? He has blessed *you*, and has enabled you to bless *others*."

The next day the aunt and the niece called on Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, but they felt a sort of repugnance towards the parents who had so embittered the youth of their favourite. Afflictions however

had given so touching an expression to the countenance of the father, whose fine person and dignified manner were themselves prepossessing, that when they saw him, they lost most of their dislike to him, especially as they observed the looks of love with which he beheld his son. The mother too was made an object of interest by her blindness, and her utter helplessness under it; and when Grace found that she could not even knit well enough to amuse herself, she determined to procure the means, and undertake to teach her two or three works which she had seen taught in a blind asylum.

Ronald meanwhile was resolved to make the residence of his parents under his roof an excuse for not going so frequently to Southgate as he was expected to do; since every fresh interview strengthened his attachment, and conse-

quently added to his hopeless unhappiness. Sometimes, too, he suspected that Grace was only too much disposed to return his affections, and that was an additional reason for him to refrain from going to the house. But vainly did he form the resolution to avoid her.

When he returned from London, he used to find her benevolently employed in teaching his poor blind mother the works I have before mentioned. When he returned from a visit at a distance, he found his parents established guests in the house of Miss Douglas; and however determined he might be to *avoid them*, they seemed equally determined *not to be avoided*.

Miss Douglas all this time was fully sensible of what was passing in the heart of Ronald and her niece, though she seemed not to notice it; but once she complimented Grace on the benevolence

which led her to take such pains to teach that stupid old woman what she really could never learn.

"My motive is not benevolence," replied Grace; "I will not take to myself credit which I do not deserve."

"Then what is your motive?"

"She is HIS MOTHER."

Miss Douglas smiled, but chose to make no further remarks.

Though Grace was not introduced into *the world*, she had not escaped the notice of *men* of the world; and her youth, her beauty, and her expectations made her the object of matrimonial speculations to more than one gentleman in the neighbourhood of Southgate. Nor was it long before Miss Douglas received proposals of marriage for her niece from three gentlemen; one of whom was a young nobleman of considerable personal recommendations. The two first were sa-

tisfied with being told in a letter from Miss Douglas, that her niece positively declined receiving their addresses; but the young peer declared that he would take a refusal from the lips of Miss Fullarton only, and Grace was resolved not to grant him the interview which he desired: but he still persisted to *request*, and she to *deny*; till wearied with his importunities, Miss Douglas determined to consult Ronald on the subject, and request him to prevail on her niece to put a stop to this persecution, by granting the desired meeting. But she did not seem likely to gain any assistance from him; for he was no sooner informed that Grace had lovers, and that one was a young nobleman in every respect worthy of her, than all self-possession forsook him, and he scarcely knew any thing that she said.

"And—and Miss Fullarton wishes to

see this young nobleman, does she?" said he in great perturbation.

"See him! No, I told you the exact contrary: she wishes to *avoid* seeing him."

"Does she *refuse* him, then?" he eagerly demanded.

"To be sure she does."

"But why?"

"Because she does not *love* him."

"Does she then love another?"

"I suspect so."

"And one likely to be approved by—"

"Oh, yes! by her parents you mean."

Ronald could not speak, he only bowed his head in acquiescence.

"Yes, if my suspicions are just, Grace is disposed to love, or does love, the man my brother and sister would most approve. But you shall judge for yourself, Mr. Douglas. Here is a letter from my sister, which I will leave with you while I go in search of Grace."

Ronald took the letter, trembling in every limb, and with such a mist before his eyes that he could not read it for some minutes after Miss Douglas left him. At length however he *did* read it; but he read no more than the first paragraph. It was sufficient, for the letter began as follows:

"My dearest sister,

"This letter will be given you by our own dear Ronald. It was painful indeed to us to part with him; but we console ourselves by looking steadily forward to the moment of his return, when he will come accompanied by our darling girl. O Mary! what happy parents should we think ourselves, as you have long known, if Grace should return to us as the wife of Ronald! for we had rather see her married to him than to the first peer of England. Do then, dear sister, let them be

as much together as possible and I doubt not but that all will be as we wish it."

Surprise, joy, gratitude, now nearly overpowered the susceptible heart of Ronald Douglas; and he threw himself on the sofa, unable almost even to think coherently, till he recollected that Miss Douglas might be mistaken, and that Grace might not love him. But now he had permission to woo, and to address her: and while this cheering thought was uppermost in his mind, the door opened, and the soft voice of Grace said, "I thought my aunt had been here."

Ronald instantly started from his recumbent posture, and seizing the hand of the astonished girl, for his countenance proclaimed the now unrestrained tenderness of his heart, he breathed in her willing ear the tale of his authorized attachment; but, too delicate to pre-

sume on what her aunt had told him, he gave her mother's letter into her trembling hands, and quitted her.

When he returned he found Grace in tears—but they were tears of joy—and holding out her hand to him she said,

"I am sorry you showed me this letter."

"Why so?"

"Lest you should suspect I love you merely from a sense of duty."

Ronald could not desire a more explicit avowal, and he left her the happiest of men.

Letters were now expected every day from India; and as soon as they were arrived, Ronald intended to write for permission to become immediately the husband of Grace, though Miss Douglas thought that the letter which she had shown him made it unnecessary to wait till an answer from Mr. Fullarton arrived:

and in the very next letter Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton both desired, that if an attachment had taken place between Ronald and their daughter, they should marry immediately, and come out to them as soon as they could. Any further delay, therefore, was out of the question.

The young nobleman, being now assured by Miss Douglas that her niece was on the point of marriage, desisted from his suit, and preparations for the nuptials were immediately begun.

Ronald had now the satisfaction of succeeding in what he had before vainly attempted, namely, to prevail on his mother to let her eyes be examined by an oculist; and he had the still greater satisfaction of finding that there was no doubt her sight might be restored by the operation of couching.

"May Heaven bless you, sir," said the poor woman to the oculist, "if you re-

store my sight! for then I shall see RONALD again, and that is enough."

The operation *was* performed, and successfully, while the delighted old woman uttered a cry of pleasure as she beheld the light of day again, and saying,

"Thank God! I shall see Ronald now," fainted away, overcome with contending emotions.

"Who is Ronald?" said the oculist.

"She means me," he replied, turning away much affected.

At length the bandage was allowed to be removed, as the eyes had recovered their powers, and she was suffered to gaze on her son; while she hung upon his neck in a transport of grateful affection, and wondered at the mercies of God to so great a sinner. But Ronald had soon rivals in her looks and her attention in his house and his furniture; and she was never tired of saying, How pretty

this is! and How beautiful that! and it required all his high-principled forbearance to make him patiently endure the troublesome and empty pleasure which these things afforded her.

"You absolutely fatigue both my ear and my spirits," said her husband one day, by constantly saying 'Ronald! Ronald!' I wish you would call him 'My son,' or 'My dear son,' as I do."

"No, Mr. Douglas, *no*," was her reply. "Nothing shall ever make me call him always 'My son,' as if he was our ONLY son."

"*I* own no other."

"But *I do*, however unworthy he may be. I cannot forget, though you may, that he was once most dear."

Her husband sighed, brushed a tear from his eyes, and said no more.

The day for the marriage was now fixed, and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas had a

new source for joy in the "*beautiful*" and "*kind-hearted*" young lady who was to be the wife of Ronald.

One evening that they and their son were at the house of Miss Douglas, the latter went home at about nine o'clock to fetch a new publication which the ladies wished to see.

There is no where a road more infested by robbers than that round Southgate and Enfield Chase; and at nine in the evening, in the early winter months, the chances of being attacked are very certain. But Ronald had escaped so often that he had lost all fear, and he went on foot unarmed and unattended from the house of Miss Douglas to his own, though that part of the Chase which he had to cross was particularly unsafe and lonesome. But he did not now cross it with impunity. Two footpads started out upon him, one of whom held a pistol to

his breast. Ronald's involuntary movement was to resist; with a powerful arm he struck the pistol from the ruffian's hand, and with a blow levelled him to the earth. He then wrenched the murderous weapon from the hand of the other, and threw him to the ground. His gardener, who was coming home from work, now approached, followed by his man, and hastened to his assistance: his first assailant now rose, and seeing this reinforcement, ran precipitately away; but the man whom Ronald kept down in his athletic grasp was unable to fly, and he was dragged struggling into the house.

"Lead him, for better security," said Ronald, "into an upper apartment; and as it is now too late to commit him, we must guard him there all night."

The men obeyed; and the footmen having seen that the windows were securely fastened with shutters hung with

bells, which the slightest attempt to escape would instantly set ringing, assisted to fasten the hands of the wretched man behind him, and returned to their master, who was pacing the room below in great agitation, shrinking from the painful task of having to appear against a fellow creature.

"I must do it, however," said Ronald to himself; "but I can recommend him to mercy." Then taking a candle in his hand, he went to the room where the prisoner was confined; and desiring to be left alone with him, he prepared to indulge the kindness of his heart, by interrogating him with a view to sooth and to serve him.

The man was sitting with his back to the door when Ronald entered and set the candle on the table before him, but he now turned round; while Ronald commanded the servants to withdraw, and the

light fell full upon his fine but bloated face. One glance of that never-to-be forgotten countenance was enough. Ronald instantly recognised it; and uttering an exclamation of agony, he leaned against the wall, and hid his face with his hands. His wretched brother, for it was indeed John Douglas, did not recognise him, and looked at him with an expression of ferocious wonder.

"What the devil is this for?" said he. "If you cannot bear the sight of me, let me go."

"Do you not know me, John?" said Ronald, turning round and advancing towards him, shuddering as he recollected him. The conscious culprit laid his head on the table, and groaned aloud.

A pause of agonizing silence ensued. It was broken by the criminal, who said in a surly tone,

"Well, I conclude I am safe now,

however; for your own sake you will not appear against me."

"Nor for yours either, John, nor for that of our poor father and mother."

"Dotards! Where are they?"

"They live with me."

"With you? That is more than they deserve, I am sure."

"Why do you speak so harshly of them? they do not deserve that from *you*, John."

"'Tis false! Their wicked indulgence made me what I am. They did not indulge *you*, Ronald, and see the difference! Curses on them!"

"Horrible!" cried Ronald. "Well, if they injured you, John, you have amply revenged yourself; for you have made them suffer severely. Poor souls! they add one to the many proofs which are daily exhibited, that even in *this* world no duty is ever violated with impunity.

They did indeed spoil you, and the evil has already been visited on their own heads. God grant that it may end here!"

"To punish them, I wish it may *increase*."

"Do not talk thus, John! You shut my heart against you."

"But not against your own *interest* shall I shut it, let me talk ever so horribly: and I tell you, you will not *hang your brother*, Ronald."

"Certainly not; and I will do still more, I will give him the means of becoming a respectable member of society."

"Indeed! but how?"

Ronald now told him, if he would quit England directly, he would allow him a comfortable income in a foreign land, where he might remain till it was safe for him to come to his own country. He then showed him that he might escape by the chimney, which was old-fashioned, and consequently wide, and he might then go

along the top of the house and drop down. He also promised him bank notes to a considerable amount. He then went to order wine and refreshments, and left the unhappy man to ponder on what he had said.

The servants were so used to their master's goodness, that they were scarcely surprised at this kindness shown to a robber and a ruffian; and there was something in the tone and look with which Ronald urged his guilty brother to eat when he returned, that for a moment softened even his callous heart, and brought a stranger tear into his eyes.

"But let me unbind your arms," said Ronald.

As he approached to do this, he observed such a malignant look in the full eye of his brother, as shocked his inmost soul, and bade him be on his guard. He therefore summoned all his self-possession; and looking him steadily in the face, he

set his hands at liberty, then slowly retreated from him.

"You are a devilish strong fellow, Ronald: but that you always were. I remember your throwing me out of the room when you were quite a lad, because I struck my mother; and just now I felt how powerful you were. Yet in a deadly struggle I am not sure you would be victorious."

"In such a struggle I trust we shall never engage."

At this moment a carriage stopped at the gate.

"It is my father and mother," cried Ronald, double locking the door lest the servants should tell them what had happened, and the former should try to enter.

The precaution was wise; for both his terrified parents came to the apartment, and his mother earnestly entreated that he would not sit alone with that *wicked wretch*, lest he should murder him.

An oath, a terrible oath, now burst from the unhappy man's lips.

"Let them come in: let them see the fruits of their folly," he cried.

While Ronald assured them he was in no danger, and having promised, that if they would but go down, he would come to them directly, they reluctantly obeyed; but as long as he continued to hear his unconscious mother's querulous and anxious tones, John Douglas muttered "*curses not loud, but deep.*"

"Poor woman!" said Ronald in a faltering tone, "I could have changed her feelings in one moment; and the wicked wretch, as she called you, would have been converted into her "*dear, dear son!*"

"Nay, she must *hate* me, and so must my father: for you know, I conclude, all my misdeeds—"

"I do; but it takes so much to make a mother's heart hate the child she has once so tenderly loved!"

"Then you think they do *not* hate me?"

"Oh, no! and one sign of penitence and regret from you would at any time make your peace."

"Really! Well, then, I do not feel, as that is the case, to hate them so bad as I did before; but when one believes one is hated, you know, it makes one hate in self-defence."

"True, very true."

"And it is easy to love when one is sure of being beloved. You have no merit, Ronald, in being what you are; for every one always loved you, except these unnatural old fools: if they had not spoiled me, I might have been like *you*, and *you* like me."

"True again; for we are all made what we are by circumstances."

"You admit it," cried John, with his face brightening even into complacency.

"Yes; and therefore you are to me an object more of *pity* than *blame*."

"Do you think so? do you say so? God bless you, Ronald! that is the kindest thing you *have* said yet."

"But tell me, John, have you considered my proposal? and will you go abroad, and lead a regular life?"

"I cannot promise; habit is so all-powerful. And so this is your house, and you have servants, and carriages, and honour, and esteem. And I, your elder brother, what have *I*, Ronald?" and again oaths and execrations burst from his lips.

"You may be any thing yet that you choose to be," replied Ronald.

"But I must be a dependent on a *younger brother's bounty*," he replied with the expression of a fiend.

"The obligation is no obligation; I serve myself in serving you: if you allow me to reclaim you, the obligation will all be on *my side*."

"Fine talking! as if you would not plume yourself on your generosity to an

unworthy brother, while my accursed parents were for ever crying out, "Only think of *Ronald's kindness* to his *wicked brother John!*"

"They should never *know* of it; it would be easy to blind them to the truth."

"Indeed! Well, I will think of what you have said."

"But I must go, as I dread my father's coming to listen at the door, and he might recognise your voice."

"Let him," said his *impracticable* son.

"But now, God bless you! I will keep the key of this room in mine, and will rise very late, that you may have all the time possible to make your escape. Once more, God bless you!"

Ronald now forcibly took his brother's hand, which responded not to his pressure, and hastened from the apartment.

"What could you stay so long with that vile wretch for?" said his mother.

"I wished to make him penitent," he replied.

"And is he?" demanded his father.

"I hope he is."

Another ringing was now heard at the gate, and Miss Douglas and Grace Fullarton rushed in. They had heard what had prevented Ronald's return, and could not rest without assuring themselves in person that he was not at all hurt.

Ronald thanked them cordially for this mark of affectionate anxiety; but the quick eye of love discovered that his cheek was pale, his eye restless, and his manner hurried.

"You are not well; you are agitated," said the anxious girl, looking up in his face. "There is something more the matter than what appears," she added in a low voice.

"Hush! be composed, my best love,"

replied Ronald: "say no more, you shall now all to-morrow."

The ladies now returned home, and Ronald and his parents retired to their apartments: but Ronald could not sleep. He was continually on the watch to hear John begin his operations: at last, just as the clock struck one, he heard a noise in his apartment, and stole gently to the door of it. He now evidently heard the sound of climbing, and as if John made at first as many steps backwards as forwards: but at length he heard him no longer; and opening a window at the back of the house, he distinctly heard, and he thought he saw, some one drop down from a projecting parapet: and relieved from one overwhelming anxiety, he returned to his chamber, and near morning fell asleep.

It was near mid-day before Ronald rung for his servant, that he might make

pursuit after the fugitive appear utterly unavailing.

When his man entered the room, he gave him the key of the robber's apartment, and desired him to let him have breakfast before the constables came for him.

"They have been here some time," replied the man; "but I did not like to disturb you, sir."

"Well, well; let them wait, and do as I bid you."

The man obeyed, but soon returned with a countenance of terror, to tell his master that the robber had escaped.

"Escaped! how could he escape?"

"By the chimney, no doubt, as there is dirt fallen on the hearth; but we can send after him."

"No, no, that were fruitless trouble indeed; for no doubt he has been gone many hours—so let him go, and dismiss the constables."

Bitter were the lamentations of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, particularly of the latter, for the evasion of the wicked man; and what they said grated so harshly on poor Ronald's feelings, that he could not remain with them, but set off for Miss Douglas's.

But it was with pain and reluctance that he now took his way to that house which contained to him the dearest being on earth; for he was going to make a disclosure to her of circumstances which might perhaps separate them for ever. However, honour required that he should make it, and he bowed in humble resignation to the trying necessity.

"I am glad you are come, my dear friend," said Miss Douglas as he entered, "for one of the *two* real friends out of Grace's supposed twenty friends, *cannot* attend her as bride-maid till two days after

the time fixed; therefore you must consent to defer your happiness two days longer, and I was now hastening to tell you so."

It was some minutes before Ronald could reply, while Grace gazed with silent anxious tenderness on his perturbed countenance. At length he uttered in a mournful accent, "My happiness must be deferred for *months*, not *days*, and perhaps *for ever*."

"What can you mean?" cried Miss Douglas, while Grace hung upon him as if to say that nothing should have power to separate them.

He then explained; and declared that if the sad, disgraceful circumstance that his brother was a *robber*, and connected with robbers, did not damp, as he believed it would not, the affection of Grace for him, still, he could not, as an honourable man, lead her to the altar,

while her parents were ignorant of the disgrace which now attached to him; that he should therefore write to India by the next ships, and await the answer of Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton.

"And is this all?" cried Grace. "Oh, how my mind is relieved!" while Ronald gratefully pressed her to his heart.

"All!" said Miss Douglas: "and enough too, I think, to make you and Mr. Douglas anxious and uneasy."

"And wherefore? for I well know what the answer from India will be."

"I am not so sure; for much as I esteem Mr. Douglas, and much as my brother and sister adore him, these are painful circumstances, and parents may well hesitate to give their only child to a man, however amiable, who is so connected."

"Not honourable, not just people, like

my father and mother," cried Grace, her whole countenance kindling with indignation as she spoke.

"Indeed, dearest girl, you are wrong; even the honourable and the just must pay respect to the world they live in; and think, if my unhappy brother does not forsake his evil courses, he may one day expiate his crimes on the scaffold, and I be a disgraced and dishonoured man."

"Then let the just and honourable leave this world which is so unfit for them to live in. What! shall a virtuous brother be the victim of a vicious brother's crimes? No, Ronald: your disgrace, as you call it, which after all may never happen, will only endear you the more fondly to me and to the good. And oh, how *paltry* is this world which you hold up in terror to my view, to one who looks above it! Your brother's crimes and pu-

nishment cannot lower you an atom in the esteem of your bountiful Creator."

"But beings of this world, my dear niece, must act and feel like and with the world; and you see that Mr. Douglas is so well convinced of this necessity, that he will not, as an honourable man, unauthorized by your parents, involve you in his possible disgrace."

"Disgrace! as if disgrace could attach to Ronald Douglas. I tell you, stain, dishonour cannot *adhere* to him; but it would drop off from him unnoxious and unfelt, as the viper dropped from the hand of the apostle. Aunt, I do not know you! You make one mad with your cold-hearted worldly notions."

"Be composed, my generous, noble girl!" cried Ronald: "I expected no less from you."

This language was balm to the wounded spirit of Ronald; and Miss Douglas

smoothed her ruffled brow, as she was not called upon to consent that the marriage should take place till an answer arrived from Calcutta, though Grace protested she was willing to go to the altar at the appointed time. But this, Ronald's high sense of honour opposed, and Grace acquiesced in its decision. The only difficulty now was, how to satisfy the wondering curiosity of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, when they found the marriage was delayed: but it was imputed to Grace's scruples, as her father and mother were ignorant of her intentions; and no suspicion was entertained concerning the real cause. But a month had now passed away since John had escaped, and yet Ronald received no tidings of him. His hopes of his conversion and amendment, therefore, wholly vanished, and anxiety for the future sadly overclouded his enjoyment of the present.

At this anxious period, however, a most unexpected and, but for one drawback, a most welcome occurrence took place.

Miss Fullarton received a letter dated from the Isle of Wight, to say that her father and mother were landed there, and that when she received that letter they would be on their road to London! But the seal was black, and Ronald's joy was damped by the certainty that the welcome return of his benefactors was purchased by the death of his beloved friend Mrs. Hatfield. Still, she was removed from a life of suffering, and he tried to remember that his regrets were selfish.

That very day, and just after the delivery of this letter, Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton arrived, and arrived to occasion and to partake of those mingled feelings of joy and sorrow which those they loved were experiencing, and at sight of them experienced still more.

With what delight did they gaze upon their daughter! But her general resemblance to her regretted aunt, which to them appeared at that moment stronger than it was, threw a tender shade over their pleasures, while it endeared her still more to their hearts.

"I hoped to find you were become my son, Ronald," said Mrs. Fullarton; "but that is not at all a bridegroom's face. However, I am not sorry to think I shall be present at the ceremony either. Are you, my dear Fullarton?"

"No, certainly not; for I shall have a pride and a pleasure in giving my child to a man whom I shall be proud to call son-in-law."

Ronald could not bear this, but ran out of the room, while Grace tried to look unconcerned, and Miss Douglas was very busy in looking for something which she said she had dropped.

"What can be the matter with Ronald?" said Mrs. Fullarton, struck by the oddness of his manner.

"He has only just heard of my poor sister's death," observed Miss Douglas. Grace was silent, and soon after she joined Ronald in the garden.

That day was passed by the Fullartons in giving details of poor Mrs. Hatfield's last illness; of the resolution taken by Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton to quit India for ever, now their only tie to it was removed; and in hearing Ronald's account of his finding his parents.

"No, no," said Ronald to Grace Fullarton, "I will not embitter our moments of meeting by telling a tale so horrible. But to-morrow I will know my doom."

To-morrow came, and Ronald repaired to the house of Miss Douglas.

No sooner did he enter on his story, and come to that part which disclosed the

robber to be his brother, than Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton started, changed colour, and looked at each other in evident consternation. How Ronald's heart died within him at this sight! and he turned a mournful glance on Grace, who had herself observed this unpromising circumstance, and stood with her arms folded in her long shawl, looking all the proud indignant defiance which she felt.

When Ronald had finished his narration, and before he could add that he had delayed his marriage, and wherefore, Mrs. Fullarton, instead of taking any notice of what he had said, beckoned her husband out of the room, and left Ronald and Grace full of the most anxious suspense. However, they soon returned; and Ronald having mentioned the delay of the marriage, and his reasons for it, in faltering accents demanded to know his doom, and whether after what he had just told

them they would still bestow their daughter on him.

"Why not?" was Mr. and Mrs. Fullartons' reply at the same moment. And Grace, exclaiming "There! I told you so," threw herself on her mother's neck, and vented the fullness of her heart in tears.

"Yes, why not? I say again," said Mr. Fullarton. "Are you not the same Ronald we have always loved? And ought not your present conduct to endear you to us still more? Does your brother's guilt alter you? And as to the disgraceful punishment you fear, that may never happen; and even if it does, who is John Douglas? Nobody need know he is your brother."

"Oh, sir!" cried Ronald, "how happy you make me! and I little expected to hear this; for the looks which you exchanged with Mrs. Fullarton, and your going out of the room, made us very uneasy."

"Ah, what did that mean?" said Grace, raising her head from her mother's shoulder.

"I will explain to Ronald," said Mr. Fullarton; and Ronald accompanied him into the garden.

The circumstance was this: Mr. Fullarton's gentleman came down the preceding night in the coach to Southgate, and one of the passengers observed soon after they got in, that a wedding was going to take place in the neighbourhood of the Chase; for that Mr. Douglas, who lived in a fine house there, was going to be married to Miss Fullarton, a great heiress.

"Indeed!" exclaimed a bold-looking showy-dressed woman, who was in the coach, her countenance assuming an expression of a most devilish nature, which the light of the lamps, as they passed Shoreditch church, made distinctly visible.

"Indeed! many things fall out between the cup and the lip."

"Very true," replied another. "But though a young lord wanted to have her, she preferred Mr. Douglas; so I think he is sure of her now."

"Life is uncertain, and Mr. Ronald Douglas is not married *yet*," said the woman.

"How do you know his name is Ronald?" asked the man who before spoke.

"What is that to you?" was the surly answer; and she said no more during the journey.

When the coach stopped, which was within a mile of Southgate, she was met by some men who seemed of very suspicious appearance; and during the rest of the drive, the passengers, after expressing their suspicions of the woman and her companions, frightened the servant by accounts of the frequent robberies

committed in the neighbourhood, and of a desperate gang who were believed to inhabit it. As soon as he came home, the terrified man, who was the husband of Mrs. Fullarton's own maid, related the conversation to his wife, lamenting that his young mistress and her intended lover should have taken up their abode in such a dangerous neighbourhood.

"But, my dear sir," said Ronald, "what is there in this stage coach conversation to alarm you and Mrs. Fullarton?"

"What! why every thing since I have heard this account of your brother; and to say the truth, as women are more quick-sighted where their affections are concerned than we are, my wife took alarm before she was fully acquainted with John's delinquency."

"Took alarm! What do you mean?"

"My dear Ronald, I must prefer truth to delicacy, and be explicit. In all serious-

ness then I assure you, that we do not think *your life safe!* Yes, you may look incredulous, but it is even so. Only recollect, that if you were dead, John would be your heir after your father's death, and he cannot be sure that you have made a will."

"I have *not* made a will; but why should you think he could be so very wicked as to assail my life?"

"Because he turned his fond parents out of doors to *perish*, for aught he knew, in the streets; because he joined a gang of robbers, and has raised his arm against *the life of a fellow-creature*. Is *such* a man, do you think, likely to be withheld by any principle from *conspiring*, at least, against the life of a brother whose death may bring him wealth and independence? Besides, is he not known to be under the guidance of a bad woman? and we all know, which is at least a compliment to

the *powers* of the other sex, that no man can be completely wicked without the aid of a wicked woman."

"And do you think the woman in the coach was John's mistress?"

"I do; and I wish to send after her. Remember, you have not heard from your brother, spite of your generous offer. Remember too, that he must hate you the more for having *conquered* him in bodily contention, and for your prosperity, and your great superiority in virtue and character—a superiority rarely forgiven even by better men than he."

"But I was kind to him, and spoke kindly."

"What then? He would say, and say truly, that you let him go for your own sake, not his."

"True; but do tell me what I can do in this perplexity; and if my life be really unsafe from John or his accom-

plices—Yet a dread of detection surely would—"

"They can have no such dread; for they cannot conceive of such a *high sense* of *honour* as yours. They cannot think that you would disclose a brother's guilt, though at the risk of losing your own happiness, and impart a disgraceful truth to me, which you might have entirely concealed: therefore they would hasten to perpetrate their crime with very rational expectations of *impunity*."

Ronald said no more; he shuddered and turned faint at the too great probability of the *truth* of this statement: but he entreated Mr. Fullarton not to insist on his sending to inquire concerning the woman in the coach; for he was secretly afraid that it might lead to the discovery and detection of his brother and his accomplices. He listened more complacently, however, to Mr. Fullarton's pro-

posal, that he should marry immediately, and set off for Westmorland from the altar, and then join him and Mrs. Fullarton in Edinburgh, where they meant to pass the winter; and in the meanwhile, though ashamed of being influenced by fears which he thought unmanly, Ronald promised to avoid being alone on the road after dark.

But unfortunately, Grace was so much indisposed, and she was also so resolved to wait till both her bridemaids could attend her to the altar, that the marriage was of necessity still delayed to the day originally appointed; and, spite of his promises and his intentions, Ronald could not help visiting her every day, and would linger near her longer than Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton approved: but as he always left them at twilight, he thought he fully kept to the agreement which he had made.

At length, the day before the intended wedding-day arrived, and Ronald went to Southgate to an early dinner.

But to return to his unworthy brother. Some months after the events which I am now describing, it was known by the confession of one of John Douglas's accomplices, who was under sentence of death, that as soon as he left Ronald's house, he repaired to his mistress and his associates, instead of going abroad; and while he talked of his brother's offers, and of his wealth, his house, and all the comforts which surrounded him, the abandoned wretches at once exclaimed, "And *you* are heir to all this when a worn-out old man *dies*."

"I am; unless my brother has a wife and children."

"That we will inquire into."

They did inquire, and found he was on the point of marriage.

"*Now*, then, or *never*," said the woman; and John was prevailed on by his female companion to approve a plan for way-laying and murdering his brother.

But he wished to be excused sharing in the bloody scene. This indulgence was, however, refused him; as they could not, in the first place, trust him or his infamous associate; and in the second, they justly thought that he who was to profit so largely by the *success* of the scheme should share in the *danger* of it; John was therefore obliged to consent.

They now set spies to watch in the neighbourhood of Ronald's house, and to learn all particulars relative to his marriage; nor was it difficult for them to gain all the information they wanted. And they knew beyond a doubt the day and the hour fixed for the union; and one of the gang saw Ronald mount his horse, dressed in a light-coloured great coat, and

a white hat—objects easily distinguished in a dark night—and proceed to the house of Miss Douglas to pay his last visit to his future bride. Ronald's horse was at the door some time before he could prevail on himself to shorten his stay; and though the hour was early, night was already come; nor could the moon be seen through the thick clouds and occasional misty rain which obscured her brilliancy.

"Have you no servant with you?" said Mr. Fullarton, who attended him to the door.

"Certainly not," replied Ronald; "but I am well armed. Really, my good friend, you are enough to make me a coward. I am mounted on a swift and powerful horse, and I shall be home in five minutes. Why should I want a servant?"

"Well, I will say no more, as I know your obstinacy, Ronald; it is the only fault I can see in you; but obstinate *you*

are. Good night, my dear son, as I may almost call you now: God bless you and *protect* you!"

Ronald was out of sight of Mr. Fullarton's house in a moment; and all idea of danger had vanished from his mind, when suddenly he heard a shrill whistle, which was immediately answered by another; and his heart died within him while he recognised in this sound the signal of impending danger, and thought that perhaps a brother's hand might at that very instant be armed against his life.

His horse now suddenly recoiled, and flung himself on his haunches. No wonder; for a rope was held across the road by two of the lurking assassins, in order to throw the horse with his rider to the earth; but the noble animal instantly recovered himself, and clearing it at a bound, continued his rapid course.

This was an unexpected discomfiture;

and the gang, rendered desperate, now advanced from their concealment, one of them firing a horse pistol just as Ronald was in sight of his own house, which shot the hat from his head.

The ruffians now approached at the instant when one of them by another shot had terrified the horse so much that he began to rear, and Ronald thought it best to dismount, and defend himself on foot. As he did so, he looked earnestly at the men who were seizing the horse's bridle and assailing him; and having assured himself that they were *strangers* to him, he fearlessly drew a pistol from his belt, and while his horse struck one ruffian with his fore feet to the ground, he fired and wounded another in the right arm, who, dropping his weapon, fled from the conflict. One ruffian alone remained to be contended with, and he had hitherto stood *aloof* from the scene of action: but he

now eagerly drew near; and before Ronald could approach him with words of *expostulation* and of *peace*, he fired at him with an agitated and trembling arm, and the ball whizzed harmlessly past him. On seeing this, the villain suddenly closed upon his intended prey, and dread and deadly was the struggle which ensued. In vain did Ronald try, in vain did he *wish* to bid his antagonist *forbear;* he found that he was engaged in the very strife of death, and that he must either *conquer* or *die*.

By this time the sound of the fire-arms reached the ears of Ronald's servants, and of one more *watchful* and more *anxious* ear.

As Ronald's father had discovered that the Fullartons entertained fears for the life of his son, he was always uneasy, and on the watch every evening till Ronald returned.

He therefore had heard, what no one *else* could hear, the *single*, but *shrill, agonized* cry which Ronald uttered for help, when his footing became slippery from the blood which had flowed from the ruffian whom he wounded, and he felt that he could not long sustain a struggle with his fierce competitor, who evidently aimed at his life with the vindictive fury of despair. At length he could no longer keep his feet: paralysed by agony of mind, as well as fatigue of body, he fell beneath the weight of the triumphant assailant, just as his father, having snatched a loaded pistol from his apartment, flew to his assistance with even the quickness of youth.

At this moment the moon burst through the cloud above them, and the old man beheld the *knife* of the ruffian aimed at the *bosom* of *Ronald!* But he *fired* at him, and his aim was mortal; for instantly uttering a trembling but *fervent* prayer

for *mercy* to the God whom he had offended, the unhappy man fell a bleeding corpse across his intended victim.

"I have saved him! I have saved my child!" cried the exulting parent clasping the grateful but wretched Ronald in his arms.

"My God! my merciful God! accept my thanks."

Ronald heard and *shuddered;* but he was thankful that the broken accents of the dying man which had carried an agonizing conviction to *his* soul, had fallen unnoticed on the ear of his father.

The servants now came with flambeaus; and Mr. Fullarton, who had heard the shots fired and had taken alarm, arrived, accompanied by his servants.

While Ronald and his antagonist had been engaged in mortal strife, the villain who had been momentarily stunned by the blow from the horse, had also disap-

peared, being disabled from renewing the contest; no vestige therefore remained of what had taken place, save the *body* of *Ronald's assailant*.

"Take him away!" cried Ronald in a voice of agony, as the servants began to raise him: "let him be recovered if possible! but take him where we may never behold him!"

"Recovered! Oh, he is quite dead!" said the man who held him.

"There is a crape on his face," observed another of the by-standers, pulling it aside as he spoke.

"Let it remain on," cried Ronald with phrensied vehemence: but the crape was removed, and by an involuntary impulse the old man stooped to gaze on the features of his victim, which now glared horribly in their paleness beneath the light of the torches. He looked, and he

recognised those features once so *beautiful*, and once so *dear!*

He spoke not one word, neither did he breathe one groan; but he turned round, and gave Ronald such a look of complicated meanings! then cast an imploring glance to heaven, and with a deep convulsive sigh fell back a lifeless corpse in the arms of his son.

"He is only in a swoon," cried Ronald; "send for assistance directly. I am sure he will soon recover;"—while feeling conquered not only the evidence of his judgement, but blinded him to the mercy of the Almighty arm which had thus suddenly destroyed that life which would otherwise have been passed in ceaseless wretchedness.

Aid was procured; but every aid was vain. And his *father* and his *brother*, the one the victim of the other's uncon-

scious hand, both lay like "the *clod of the valley*" under the roof of Ronald. And oh! how did it increase his grief that he could not, dared not, lay them beside each other! Nor could he inter them together —but while the one would be followed with all the honour and attendance which he could bestow upon him, the other must, he knew, be consigned like a nameless vagabond to the grave, nor even might the coffin tell who rested within it. To the eye of reason this was indeed no hardship; but to the heart of feeling it was a circumstance to add bitterness to the cup of sorrow.

The poor unconscious widow, meanwhile, who had gone to bed early with severe indisposition, slept soundly through the awful scene, and it was morning before she awoke, and missed her husband from her side: another glance convinced her that his pillow had not been pressed,

nor were his clothes in the room. Instantly her bell rung through the house, and Ronald with a face full of mournful tidings obeyed its summons.

"Where is your father?"

Ronald only answered by his tears, and they left him little more to tell, or her to hear.

"But let me rise; I will see him," cried she, when her first burst of grief was abated; and Ronald led her where his father lay. But he could not bear to witness her lamentation; still less could he endure what she uttered when Mr. Fullarton told her that her husband had killed a robber with his own hand who was about to kill Ronald, and that in the effort and the alarm he had probably burst one of the vessels of the heart.

"Poor soul!" cried she: "I dare say if he had known it he would have been glad to die for Ronald; for he loved him

so fondly now, so that he seemed quite to forget he had another son."

"*Forget!* Oh, no!" thought Ronald; "he *remembered that* only too *keenly:*" and rushing from the room he dared not then draw near his poor mother again.

But her feelings, never of the strongest nature, were now blunted by increasing years; and though Ronald remained dejected and unconsoled, though soothed by the sympathies of friendship and the tender sympathies of love, his mother soon recovered the usual tone of her spirits, and could not help exclaiming,

"How odd it does seem to me, that Ronald should be more inconsolable for the loss of his father, than I am who was his wife! But then, to be sure, he saved Ronald's life, and that gave him his death, poor soul!"

Alas! she little knew the dreadful con-

sciousness that still and long haunted the memory of Ronald.

But the sorrows of the virtuous yield surely, though gradually, to the influence of time; and those pangs only are lasting and memorable which are inflicted by a self-reproving conscience.

The heart of the pious man clings closely, eagerly, and thankfully to every thought that offers comfort to his soul; and Ronald turned from the most agonizing of his recollections, to dwell on the faltering but ardent prayer which escaped from the lips of his dying brother: he also remembered, that the wretched man had reluctantly entered into the strife of death, and that he had not assailed him till he was urged by the fury of despair. Nor did he fail to derive comfort from the thought, that his father had rejoiced greatly in having saved the

life of one son, and had been mercifully snatched from the misery of mourning over the fate of the other, who had fallen beneath his own unconscious arm.

Ronald at length received the reward of his virtues and a balm for his sorrows in the possession of the object of his love; and as the nephew of Mr. Fullarton died young and unmarried, soon after the marriage, that gentleman resumed the possession of his paternal inheritance.

Ronald, at his mother's desire, bought her a comfortable house in his native village, where, to the day of her death, she always lived *in hopes* of hearing from her *elder son*.

On his marriage, he took his bride to L——, and she had the satisfaction of seeing those who loved Ronald, and of hearing his praises from their lips. They then proceeded to Scotland; and Ronald having purchased an estate near that of

Mr. Fullarton, that gentleman and his amiable wife received the reward of their benevolence, by witnessing the *happiness* of their ADOPTED SON, and seeing him make the *happiness* of their DAUGHTER.

A WOMAN'S LOVE,

AND

A WIFE'S DUTY.

You command, and I obey: still, so conscious am I of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and especially of my own, that I am doubtful whether I am not following the dictates of self-love when I seem to be actuated by friendship only, as you have repeatedly assured me, that the story of my life will not alone *amuse* and *interest* you, but also hold up to an injudicious and suffering friend of yours a salutary example of the patient fulfilment of a *wife's duty*.

There is something very gratifying to one's self-love, in being held up as an ex-

ample; but *remember*, I beg, that while to oblige you I draw the veil from past occurrences, and live over again the most trying scenes of my life, I think myself more a warning than an example; and that if I exhibit in any degree that difficult and sometimes painful task, the fulfilment of a wife's duty, I at the same time exhibit the rash and dangerous fervour of a *Woman's Love*.

I must begin my narrative by a short account of my progenitors.

Introduction.

My grandfather and the grandfather of Seymour Pendarves were brother's, and the younger sons of a gentleman of ancient family and large possessions in the county of Cornwall; some of whose paternal ancestors were amongst the first settlers in America. Disappointments of which I never heard the detail, and dislike

of their paternal home, determined these young men to leave their native country, and embark for the new world, where the family had still some land remaining, and on the improvement of which they determined to spend a sum of money which had been left them by a relation. They carried out with them, besides money, *enterprise*, *industry*, *integrity*, and *talents*. After they had been settled in Long Island three years, they found themselves rich enough to marry; and the beautiful daughters of an opulent American farmer became their wives.

My grandfather had only one child, a son; but his brother had a large family, of whom however one only survived, a son also. These two cousins were brought up together, and were as much attached to each other as if they had been brothers.

Never, as I have been told, was there a scene of greater domestic happiness than

my grandfather's house exhibited, till death deprived him of his beloved wife. He did not long survive her; and my uncle soon afterwards lost his equally beloved sister, whose health had been destroyed first by the fatigue of attendance on her sick children, and then by grief for their loss.

George Pendarves, the sad survivor of so many dear ones, now lost his spirits, lost that energy which had so much distinguished him before; and he soon sunk under the cessation of those habits of exertion and temperance which he had once practised, and, after two or three years of protracted suffering, died. Thus the two youthful cousins found themselves both orphans before they had reached the age of twenty.

They had not inherited their parents' dislike of Europe. On the contrary, when their fathers imparted to them the learning and the elegant arts which they had

acquired at the University, and in the society of England, they were impressed with respect and admiration for the sources whence such precious stores were derived, and resolved to enter themselves at an English college.

Accordingly, having put a confidential agent into their farms, they set sail for the land of their ancestors, and arrived at PENDARVES CASTLE, the seat of their eldest paternal uncle, who had come into possession of the estates on the death of his father.

At this time my mother and Lady Helen Seymour, the daughter of Lord Seymour, were both on a visit there. The young Americans had now been some months expected, and their relations had long been amusing themselves with conjecturing what these SAVAGES (as they fancied them) would be like; while they anticipated much pleasure from behold-

ing their surprise at manners, scenes, and accommodations so different from their own. Nor was my mother, though she was their relation, and herself a Pendarves, less forward than her friend Lady Helen to hold up these strangers in a ridiculous view to her imagination, and to express an unbenevolent eagerness for the arrival of the *Yankies*.

At length they came; and it was on the evening of a ball given by Mr. Pendarves to celebrate the birth-day of his wife. The dance was begun before they arrived; and their uncle was called out of the room to receive them. He went with a heart warmed with fraternal affection, and yearning towards the representatives of his regretted brothers: but the emotion became overpowering when he beheld them; for those well-remembered brothers seemed to stand before him in improved loftiness of stature, dignity of

person, and beauty of feature. From their mothers they had inherited that loveliness and symmetry which so peculiarly distinguish American women; and in stature they towered even above their father's family.

The young men at the same time were considerably affected at sight of Mr. Pendarves, as he reminded them strongly of their parents. While these endearing reeollections were uppermost in their minds, Mr. Pendarves at first wholly forgot how different his nephews were from the pictures his laughter-loving family had delighted to draw of them. But when he did recollect it, he enjoyed the idea of the surprise which their appearance would occasion.

Their dress as well as their manners bespoke the perfect gentlemen; but their hair was not yet spoiled by compliance with the fashion of England at that pe-

riod; for it curled, uncontaminated by powder, in glossy clustering ringlets on their open brows.

Such were the young men who now followed Mr. Pendarves to the apartment in which his lady received her guests.

"Dear me, how surprising!" cried that lady, who was very pretty, very volatile, and very apt to think aloud. "Are these the Yankies? Why I protest they look more like Christians than savages, and are like other people; except that they are much *handsomer* than other people."

This last part of her speech made some amends for the first part; but had she been of a contrary opinion, Mrs. Pendarves would have uttered it; and the glow of indignation on their cheek was succeeded by that of gratified vanity; for their hostess added to her compliment by asking Mr. Pendarves if he was not quite proud of his nephews.

He replied in the affirmative, declaring himself impatient to show them to the assembled family. It was therefore with cheeks dyed with becoming blushes, and eyes sparkling with delight at the flattering welcome which they had received, that they followed their uncle to the ball-room; but at his desire they stopped within the folding-doors, whence they surveyed the gay groups before them. Mr. Pendarves made his way amongst the dancers, and accosting his guest Lady Helen Seymour, and Julia Pendarves his niece, told them they must leave the dance a little while, for he must present to them the *Yankies*, who were just arrived.

"I will come as soon as I have been down the dance," they both exclaimed. "But how unfortunate they should come to-night! for what can we do with them, in a fine party like this? because," said Julia, though they may do to laugh at in

our own family circle, one should not like to see one's relations supply subjects for laughter to other people."

The dance was now beginning, and Mr. Pendarves smiling sarcastically as he listened to his niece, allowed her to dance to the bottom of it, secretly resolving that she should now *ask* him for that introduction which she had thus delayed; and in the meanwhile he amused himself with watching for the first moment when Lady Helen and Julia should discover the two strangers, which he knew they could not fail to do, as the dance down which they were now going fronted the folding doors.

Mr. Pendarves did not watch long in vain; Lady Helen and her companion saw them at the same instant, and were so struck with their appearance, that they were out in the figure, and wondered to their partners who those strangers could be.

"I cannot think," replied one of the gentlemen; "but they look like brothers, and are the finest and handsomest men I ever saw."

Julia whispered Lady Helen, "Is it possible these can be your Yankey cousins? If so, I am so ashamed!"

"And so am I: and do look at my uncle; he is laughing at us."

"Oh, it must be they, I am so shocked!"

When they reached the bottom of the dance, they vainly looked towards Mr. Pendarves: he cruelly kept aloof. The strangers turned however eagerly round at hearing some one behind them address another by the name of Miss Pendarves.

Their glowing cheeks, their animated looks, were not lost on their equally conscious observers; and Mr. Pendarves now good-naturedly came forward to put a stop to this embarrassing dumb show, by

presenting the cousins to each other, and then introducing them to Lady Helen.

You remember my mother, and you have seen a picture of Lady Helen: you will not wonder, therefore, that the sudden admiration which Lady Helen felt that evening for George Pendarves, and my mother for Charles, was as warmly returned. It even seemed that their attachment foreran that of their lovers, for the cousins went to college without disclosing their love. On their return, however, finding the dangerous objects whom they meant to avoid still at Pendarves, they ventured to make their proposals; and unsanctioned by parental authority, Lady Helen and my mother accepted the vows of their lovers, and pledged theirs in return.

I shall pass over the consequent misery which they underwent, and simply state that the two friends were at last so hurried away by their romantic affection, that

they allowed the cousins to carry them to Gretna Green; and that after the ceremony they embarked from the nearest Scotch port for America.

At first Lady Helen was too happy in the new ties which she had formed to feel much sorrow or much compunction when she remembered those which she had broken. But when she became a parent herself, and learnt the feelings of a mother, she thought with agonizing regret on the pains which she had inflicted on her own, and in the bitterness of awakened remorse she supplicated to be forgiven. The answer to this letter was sealed with black, and was in the hand of her father! It was as follows:

"Your mother is dead, and it was your disobedience which killed her. Expect, therefore, no forgiveness from me.

"SEYMOUR."

A fever of the brain was the consequence of this terrible stroke, and her life was despaired of. In the agonies therefore of anxious affection, George Pendarves wrote to Lord Seymour, retorting on him his own blow, for he told him that his letter had *killed Lady Helen.*

The wretched husband inflicted as much pain as he intended; for Lady Helen, however faulty, was Lord Seymour's *favourite* child—his only daughter; and the next letters from America were expected with trembling anxiety. The information therefore that Lady Helen was better was *received* with gratitude, though it did not procure an offer of forgiveness.

My mother, though not quite such a culprit as Lady Helen, because she was one of many daughters, left an aged grandmother, and an affectionate uncle with whom she lived; but the former pronounced her forgiveness before she breathed

her last, and suffered the will to remain in force in which she had left her a handsome legacy. Nor was her uncle himself slow to pronounce her pardon. She therefore had no drawbacks on her felicity but the sight of Lady Helen's constant dejection, which was so great that my father thought it right to make an effort to procure her the comfort of Lord Seymour's pardon.

The troubles in America were now on the eve of breaking out, for it was the year 1772; and the joy of my birth was considerably damped to my affectionate parents by the increasing agitation of the country. But George Pendarves was too miserable and too indignant to write himself; he therefore gladly deputed my father to write for him. While they were impatiently awaiting the reply, they both busied themselves in politics, in order to escape from domestic uneasiness; and though undetermined which side to take,

they were considerably inclined to espouse the cause of the mother country, when Lord Seymour's answer arrived, in which he offered Lady Helen and her husband his entire forgiveness, on condition that the latter took part against the rebels, as he called them, and accepted a commission in the English army, which would soon be joined by his son, Colonel Seymour.

It is impossible to say which at this trying moment was the governing motive of George Pendarves,—whether it was chiefly political conviction, or whether he was influenced insensibly by the wish of conciliating his father-in-law, in order to restore peace to the mind of the woman whom he adored; but certain it is that this letter hastened his decision, and that my father, who loved him as a brother, coincided with him in that decision, and resolved to share his destiny.

Accordingly, both the cousins *accepted*

commissions in the British army; and when Colonel Seymour met his brother-in-law at head-quarters, he presented to him a letter from his father, containing a fervent blessing for Lady Helen and himself.

The husband and the brother soon after obtained permission to visit the one his wife, and the other his sis er; and something resembling peace of mind, on one subject at least, returned to the patient Lady Helen, while with a mother's pride she put into the arms of her brother her only child, Seymour Pendarves, to whom, unpermitted, she had given the name of her family, and who was then seven years old. But now a *new* source of anxiety was opened upon her. Her husband was become a soldier, and she had to fear for his life; nor was she in a state to follow him to battle, as she would otherwise have done, because she had lately been confined with a dead child. My mother was in this

respect more fortunate; for she was able to accompany her husband to the seat of war, and she persisted to do so, though both my father and his cousin earnestly wished her to stay with Lady Helen and myself, I being at that period only two years old.

But my mother had set up her husband as the only idol whom she was called upon to worship, and before that idol she bowed down in singleness of adoration; nor could the inconvenience to which her resolution exposed him at all shake her constancy. She was equally insensible also to the anxiety which her leaving Lady Helen at such a time occasioned, both to the husband and the brother of that amiable being.

The reply of "It is my duty to accompany my husband as long as I can" silenced all objections from others, and all the whisperings of her own affectionate

heart, and she tore herself away, though not without considerable pain, from the embrace of her friend, and committed me to her maternal care.

Dreadful was the moment of separation between Lady Helen and her husband; but the former bore it better than the latter; for, as her mind was impressed with the idea that she had deserved her afflictions, she believed that by patient submission to the divine will, she could alone show her sense of the error which she had committed. Yet, independently of the violence thus done to the enjoyment of the purest of affections, it was impossible for a feeling heart and a reflective mind to contemplate that awful moment without agony; that moment when brother was about to arm against brother; when men speaking the same language, and hitherto considering themselves as subjects of the same king, were marching

in dread array against each other, and breathing the vows of vengeance against those endeared to them perhaps by habits of social intercourse and the interchange of good offices. Such was the scene now exhibited at Lexington, in the April of 1775; for there the *first* blood was spilt in the American contest.

In that hour of deadly strife my mother's trial was not equal to Lady Helen's; for she could linger around the fatal field, she could ask questions of stragglers from the army, and her daily suspense would end with every day; while other anxious wives around her, by sharing, soothed her uneasiness. But Lady Helen was in a sick chamber, surrounded by servants and by objects of interest which only served to heighten her distress; for, as she gazed upon her son and her charge, she knew not but that she was gazing at that moment upon fatherless orphans.

There is certainly no comparison in strength between the uneasiness which can vent itself in *exertion*, and that which is obliged by circumstances to remain in *inaction*.

But not at the battle of Lexington was the heart of Lady Helen doomed to bleed. Her husband escaped unwounded, and *once* more he returned to her and to his children. The interview was indeed short, but it was a source of comfort to Lady Helen, which ended but with her life. His looks, his words of love during that meeting were treasured up with even a miser's care; for after their parting embrace, after that happy interview, they *never met more*.

George Pendarves fell in the next decisive battle which was fought near his residence. By desire of his afflicted brother, the body was conveyed to his own house, which was near to that of the un-

conscious widow. The bearers mistook their orders, and conveyed it home. Lady Helen, who was at that moment teaching me my letters, after having set Seymour his lesson, broke off to listen to an unusual noise of feet in the hall; then gently opening the door, she leaned over the banister to discover the cause. Young as I was, never can I forget the shriek she uttered which told she had *discovered it!* While wildly rushing down stairs, she threw herself upon the bloody corse. We, echoing her cry, followed her in helpless terror: but fear and horror were my only feelings. Poor Seymour, on the contrary, was old enough to take in the extent of the misery, and I yet hear his fond and fruitless exclamations of "Papa! dear papa!" and his vain but still repeated supplication that he would open his eyes and speak to him.

Lady Helen now neither screamed, nor

spoke, nor wept; but she sat in the *silent desolation* of her soul on the couch by the body of Pendarves, with eyes as fixed and even as rayless as his. There was a something in this still grief which seemed to awe the by-standers into stillness also. No hand was lifted to remove *her* from the *body*, nor the *body* from *her*. The only sounds of life were the *sobs of Seymour*; for my cries had been checked by alarm and the groans of the compassionate witnesses, or the grief of the servants. But this state of feeling could not last long, and I remember that Seymour destroyed it; for, looking terrified by his mother's changed countenance, he threw his arms passionately around her, conjuring her not to look so terribly, but to take him on her lap, and speak to him. The attendants now came up to take her away; but she resisted all their efforts with the violence of phrensy, till she sunk exhaust-

ed into their arms, and could resist no longer. The month that ensued was a blank in the existence of Lady Helen. That pressure on the brain from which she had suffered so much before returned, and delirium ending in insensibility ensued. When consciousness was restored, her feelings of humble piety and deep contrition returned with it, and kissing the rod which had chastised her, she resolved for our sakes to struggle with her grief, and enter again upon a life of usefulness.

My father meanwhile fought, and my mother followed his fortunes. Once he was brought wounded to his tent, and she was allowed to nurse him till he recovered. After that, she had to cross the country, and endure incredible hardships; but her husband lived, and hardships seemed nothing to her.

During this time, a period of two years,

I have heard Seymour Pendarves say, that he dreaded his mother's receiving a letter from the army, because it made her so wretched. He used to call my father and mother uncle and aunt; and when, in seeing her affliction, he asked her whether uncle Pendarves was shot, or aunt Pendarves ill, she was accustomed to reply, "No, they are indeed sufferers; but have much to be thankful for, for *he lives*, they are *together*, and SHE IS HAPPY!"

In the October of 1777, the British army commanded by General Burgoyne, under whom my father now served and held a major's commission, was obliged to lay down their arms at Saratoga, yet not before my father had been severely wounded and taken prisoner. This was a new trial to my mother's constancy: but her courage and her perseverance seemed to increase with the necessity for them; and had she wanted any other incitement to

to fortitude than her conjugal affection and her sense of duty, she would have found it in the splendid example of Lady Harriet Ackland, whose difficulties and dangers in the performance of a wife's extremest duty will ever form a brilliant page in the annals of English history.

Some of the dangers and many of the difficulties of Lady Harriet had been endured by my mother, but had ended in her being allowed to share the prison of my father; when, on the surrender of General Burgoyne's army, the officers were allowed to return on their parole to England.

My father, therefore, was glad to hasten to that spot from choice, to which he might be ultimately driven by necessity; and my mother, who never liked America, was rejoiced to return to the dear land of her birth. Lady Helen, meanwhile, had undergone another sorrow; but one which during its progress had

given a new interest to life. Her brother, Colonel Seymour, had been desperately wounded at the beginning of the year 1777, and had been conveyed in a litter to the house of his widowed sister.

Had the wounds of Lady Helen's heart ever been entirely closed, this circumstance would have opened them afresh. "So (she was heard to say) would I have nursed and watched over my husband, and tried to restore him to life; but to go *at once*, no *warning*, no *preparation!* But God's will be done!" and then she used to resume her quiet seat by the bedside of her brother; whom, however, neither skill nor tenderness could restore. He died in her arms, blessing her with his last breath.

Colonel Seymour was only a younger brother; but having married an heiress, who died soon after, leaving no child, and bequeathing him in fee her large fortune, he

was a rich man. This fortune, as soon as he was able to hold his pen, he bequeathed equally between his sister Lady Helen and her son, desiring also that his remains might be sent to England, to be interred in the family vault of his wife.

I was five years old when my father and mother returned to us to prepare for their departure to England, and to prevail on Lady Helen to accompany them; and I have a perfect recollection of my feelings at that moment, or rather, I should say, of my first seeing them; for Seymour and I were both in bed when they arrived. I have heard since that my father's resemblance to his brother awoke in Lady Helen remembrance even to agony, and that he was not much less affected. I also heard that my mother soon hastened to gaze upon her sleeping child, and to enjoy the luxury of being a parent, after having been so long engrossed by

the duty of a wife; for though she had been confined once during her perils, her confinement had not added to her family.

The next morning I remember to have felt a joy, I could not tell why, at hearing that my father and mother were come, and that I was both pleased and pained when Seymour ran into the nursery screaming out, "O Ellen! my uncle and aunt are come, and I have seen them; but they are very ill-looking, poor souls! and my uncle is so lame!"

"Ill-looking, and my papa lame!" thought I. It was with difficulty the nurse could prevail on me to obey the summons; and I behaved so ill when I got to their bedside, that they were glad to send me away. It was impossible that I could know either of them, they were really so pale and haggard through fatigue and suffering; and I shrunk frightened and averse from their embraces.

True, the name of mother was asso-

ciated in my mind with all that I best loved, for by that name I called Lady Helen; but why did I so? Because she had been to me the tenderest of guardians, and had fulfilled the duty which my real parent had been forced to resign. On returning to the nursery, I found Lady Helen, to whom I clung in an agony of tears, satisfied that *she* was my *own dear mamma*.

But when my father and mother were seated at the breakfast-table, and gave me some of the nice things set before them, I became less averse to their caresses, and before the day was over I consented to have one papa and two mammas; while Seymour assured me he thought my papa, though *ill*, very handsome, and like his own poor papa.

At first Lady Helen shrunk from the idea of returning to England; but she at length consented, from consideration of the superior advantages which her two

young charges would receive from an English education, and as it was evidently in conformity to her brother's intention. Accordingly, in the beginning of the year 1779 we arrived at Liverpool, bringing with us the bodies of Colonel Seymour and George Pendarves.

Well was it for Lady Helen that we reached the inn at Liverpool at night, and that she had had some hours of refreshing slumber, to prepare her for the unexpected surprise which awaited her the next day. While she and my parents were at breakfast the following morning, and Seymour and I were amusing ourselves with looking out at the window, we saw a very elegant carriage drive up to the door; our exclamations called Lady Helen to us.

"What are those pretty things painted on the sides, mamma?" asked Seymour.

"An earl's coronet, and supporters to

the arms, my dear," repeated Lady Helen in a faint voice, and suddenly retreating, as she saw there were gentlemen in the carriage, who looked up on hearing the children's voices. It was her father's.

Nor had time, suffering and sickness so altered her beautiful features as to render them irrecognisable by a father's heart. Catching the arm of Lord Mountgeorge, his son, who was with him, Lord Seymour exclaimed,

"O Frederic! surely I have beheld your sister!" and with trembling limbs he alighted, and reached the rooms bespoken for him.

He was on his way from London to the seat of a gentleman near Liverpool, from whose house he was to proceed to his own place in the North.

He now sent for the landlord, and begged to know if there were not some American strangers in the house; and on

receiving from him a confirmation of his suspicions, he desired one of the waiters to tell Major Pendarves that a gentleman begged to see him.

On entering the room, Major Pendarves took in silence the hand which the agitated earl in silence tendered to him, The past and the present rushed over the minds of both; while Lord Mountgeorge, whose emotion was less violent, begged the major to prepare his sister to receive them.

In the meanwhile Lord Seymour, with his heart full of his lost son, surveyed with respectful pity the faded cheek and altered form of the once blooming Charles Pendarves.

"You did not look thus when we last met," said he: "but you have suffered in a noble cause, and *you* have only lost your *health*."

Here the lip of the bereaved parent

quivered with agitation, and Lord Mountgeorge turned mournfully away.

My father then rejoined his party in evident agitation.

"What new sorrow awaits me?" cried Lady Helen; "for I see it is for me you are affected, not for yourself."

"No, my friend; these tears are tears of emotion, but of pleasure also."

"Pleasure!"

"Yes: Lord Seymour and your brother are in the next room, and eagerly long to see you."

The feelings which now strove for victory in Lady Helen's breast were too much for her weakened frame to support; and shuddering and panting, she caught hold of my mother to save herself from falling, while the scream of the terrified Seymour, as he beheld her nearly fainting on the sofa, was heard by the anxious expectants, who hastily entered the room.

Lady Helen, who had not lost her senses, instantly sunk on one knee before her agitated parent, and pushing her son toward him desired him to plead for his unhappy mother.

"Helen," cried Lord Seymour in a voice broken by sobs, "you need no advocate but my own heart;" and Lady Helen was once more clasped to his bosom.

"And is this fine creature my grandson?" said he, gazing with delight on Seymour, while he kissed his open forehead; then seating himself by his daughter on the sofa, while Lord Mountgeorge sat by her on the other side, he drew the wondering boy to his knee.

My father now presented my mother and myself to Lord Seymour.

"I am disappointed," said he civilly; "I hoped, Mrs. Pendarves, that this lovely girl was my grandchild also."

This was enough to conciliate my young heart; and I wondered to myself, I remember, why my Lady mamma should have seemed so sorry at seeing such a good-natured old gentleman; nor could I conceive why Lord Seymour, as he kept looking on Lady Helen, should shed so many tears.

"My poor Helen," cried he, "your face tells a tale of sad suffering:—and Augustus too, both gone! But they both fought bravely."

"Aye, but they *died*," cried Lady Helen, clasping her hands convulsively.

"And they shall both have a magnificent monument erected to their memory, my child," cried Lord Seymour.

Lady Helen looked gratefully up in her father's face as he said this.

Lord Seymour now wrote to his friend, to say that he and his son were prevented paying him the promised visit; and the

next day we all set forward for the seat of Lord Seymour.

I forbear to describe poor Lady Helen's feelings when we reached Seymour Park, and what she endured when she visited, at her own family vault, the remains of her beloved mother, after she had seen her husband and brother interred in that of the *latter*. But she had the consolation of knowing that Lord Seymour's resentment had made him unjust, as a mortal malady had long been preying on her existence.

Having only visited Seymour Park in order to witness the funeral solemnities, my father and mother soon took their leave, and, to my great agony, insisted that I should accompany them on their projected visit to Pendarves Castle, and also to my grandfather and grandmother; and I well recollect the violent sorrow which I experienced when I was torn from Seymour and Lady Helen. I was

told, however, that I should certainly come back to them, and not soon leave them again; and that pacified me. Indeed, it was my father's intention to settle near Lady Helen Pendarves, who meant to fit up a cottage in her park for their residence.

When my father and his cousin first came over to England, they had found some property due to them in right of their father's will. This property was vested in the English funds, and there it had remained untouched, both principal and interest, for eight years. During this period it had accumulated so much, as to be sufficient for us to live upon, should the event of the war be such as to cause the confiscation of our American estates; and my mother had also to receive the legacy bequeathed by her grandmother. Their present enjoyment, therefore, was not clouded over to my parents by the fear of pecuniary distress; and after their

first arrival at Pendarves Castle, that scene so fraught with grief in its results to friends most dear to them, they looked forward with joyful anticipation to the future.

They were speedily joined there by my mother's uncle and her parents. Thither, too, Lady Helen had at last resolution to venture also; and I was again united to my brother Seymour, as I always called him.

On leaving her carriage, Lady Helen desired to be shown to my mother's apartment, in order to recover herself before she saw the rest of the family; for she dreaded to encounter the thoughtless Mrs. Pendarves, a woman without any tact whatever, who would say things that wounded the feelings in the most susceptible part.

On the third day, while she was administering a nervous medicine to her wi-

dowed guest, she could not help exclaiming,

"Poor dear! what will all the physic in the world do for you, cousin Helen? as the man says in the play,

'What can minister to a mind diseased?'

And

'Give physic to the dogs.'"

Here my mother with a pathetic look motioned her to be silent, but in vain.

"Nay, my dear Julia," said she, "I must speak; my dear cousin Helen will not know else how I have cried and lain awake all night with thinking of her miseries."

"She does not doubt your kind sympathy, dear aunt, she does not, indeed."

"But she cannot be sure of it, Mrs. Charles, unless I tell her of it; and tell her

'I cannot. But remember, such folks were,
And were most dear to all.'

Oh! he had

'an eye like Mars!'

and that is quite appropriate, you know, as he died in battle. I mean your poor husband, poor George Pendarves; not your brother, I never saw him."

My mother looked aghast. Since the death of George Pendarves no one had ever ventured to name him to Lady Helen:

"But fools rush in where angels dare not tread."

And Lady Helen hid her face in agonizing surprise on my mother's shoulder.

"Ah! one may see by your eyes that you have shed many tears. Why, they tell me you never knew what had happened till you saw the poor dear love lying dead and bleeding. There was a shock! Oh! how I pity you, dearest soul! I have often thought it was a mercy that you did not fall over the banisters, and break your neck."

"It broke my heart," screamed out

Lady Helen in the voice of phrensy, unable to support any longer the horrible picture thus coarsely brought before her; and in another moment the house resounded with her hysterical cries; while Mrs. Pendarves added, she could not but think Lady Helen was very bad still, as she could not bear to be pitied; though pity was said to be very soothing—and though she,

> "like pity on one side,
> Her grief-subduing voice applied."

As my mother expected, Lady Helen now conceived a terror of Mrs. Pendarves, which nothing could conquer; and her health became so visibly worse, that she quitted the place the following week, accompanied by my father and mother, and my mother's uncle, to London, leaving Seymour and myself behind, to be spoiled by our too indulgent relatives.

In a short time my father and mother

had settled their pecuniary concerns, and purchased furniture for their new habitation, of which they now hastened to take possession; and there we soon joined them.

I have detailed thus minutely the sentiments and sorrows of those with whom my earliest years were passed, as I believe that by them my character was in a great measure determined; and that I owe the merit which you attribute to me, and the errors of which I am conscious, to having been the pupil of *Lady Helen*, and the daughter of *Julia* Pendarves.

The next three years passed quietly away; but my parents observed with pain that Lady Helen's visits to Seymour Park became more and more frequent, though Lord Seymour had married a young wife before his daughter's return, who was jealous to excess of Lady Helen's influence over her lord, and that she had

evidently lost much of her enjoyment of their society. The truth was, that though Lady Helen did not envy the happiness of my parents, it was not always that she could bear to witness it; because it recalled painfully to her mind the period of her life when *she* was *equally* happy; and she had no longer that sympathy with my mother which is the foundation and the cement of friendly intercourse: so true is it that *equality of prosperity*, like *equality of situation*, is necessary to give *stability* to friendship. My mother, though she felt this, was too delicate openly to repine.

My intercourse with her, and the benefit which I derived from her instructions, remained the same, for I was always allowed to accompany Lady Helen to Seymour Park.

But alas! the tide of sympathy towards my poor mother, which had been checked

in Lady Helen's bosom by happiness, now flowed again with increased fulness, when she was summoned to console her under a sorrow kindred with her own.

My father had been saved from the dangers of war to perish at home by a *violent death*. He was thrown from his horse, struck his head against a stone, and died upon the spot.

Lady Helen having removed her to her own house, devoted her whole attention to the offices of a comforter. In proportion as my poor mother's sense of happiness had been keen, her sense of privation was overwhelming.

But, so curiously, so mercifully are we fashioned, that we are sometimes able to derive medicine for our suffering, from its very excess.

My mother was, as you well know, a woman of *high aspirings*, and loved to be pre-eminent in all things. She was

proud of her conjugal love; she was proud of the dangers which she had dared under its influence, and of the sufferings to which she rose superior, to prove the tender excess of that love; she was proud also of her good fortune in having her husband's life so long preserved to her, and she gloried in his devoted and faithful affection. But now of this idolized husband she was bereaved in a moment, and without any alleviating circumstances.

Soothing though painful are the tears which we shed for those who fall in battle; and sweet, "like music in the dead of night," heard after distressing dreams, or while we are kept waking by mournful realities, falls the sound of a *nation's regret* on the ear of those who weep over a *departed hero*.

But my father died *ingloriously*, and YET my mother felt pride derived from that *very source;* for it made her in her

own estimation *pre-eminent* in trial; for how hard was it, after having shared her husband's dangers, and the struggles of war, to see him perish at home, the victim of an ignoble accident!

"Had he died in the field of glory, I might have found (she cried) some solace in his renown; and I was prepared to see him fall when others fell around him. But to perish *thus!* Oh! never was woman's trial so severe."

And thus while descanting on the pre-eminence of her misfortunes, she got rid of much of their severity.

You remember with what eloquence my mother used to describe what she had endured in America; you have also, I believe, heard her speak of the manner of my poor father's death; but you never heard, what I have often listened to with the pity which I could not utter, Lady

Helen's assertion of her *own* trying sorrow, when my mother had harrowed up her feelings by the painful comparison.

"You may remember that *you* were happy *many years:* but I (here tears choked her voice) remember that while you were allowed to prove your love by soothing the sufferings of the being whom you adored, and had his smile to reward you, *I* was forced to prove mine only in the privacy of solitary and almost maddening recollections. Till recently, *you* have never known a *real affliction;* and I, oh! when have I *for years* experienced an enjoyment?"

This language used to *silence,* if it did not *convince,* my mother.

But however they might dispute on the superiority of their trials, they loved each other the better for them, and were now scarcely ever separated.

Hence Seymour and I were in a measure educated together, till it was judged fit that he should go to a public school. This painful trial was imposed on Lady Helen by her relations, and approved by her own judgement against the suggestions of her feelings; when I was eleven, and Seymour near fifteen years old, and when our mothers, as I was not long in discovering, had projected a union between us, and had promised each other to do all they could to ensure it.

Thus ends my *Introduction*.

Here begins, my dear friend,

THE HISTORY

OF

SEYMOUR AND HELEN PENDARVES.

FORGIVE me, if I introduce my narrative with a very vulgar but a most excellent proverb, which is, that "Little pitchers have wide ears;" or, that children hear many things which they ought not to hear, and which they were certainly not intended to hear. Now to illustrate the truth of this proverb, and this explanation of it.

It certainly could not be the intention of two such sensible women, that I should know I was designed for the wife of Seymour Pendarves; and yet, they talked of their plans so openly before me, that I was perfectly mistress of their designs; and that precocity of mind which they had often

remarked in me was increased so much by this consciousness, that while they fancied I was thinking on my doll or my baby-house I was in reality meditating on my destined husband, till my heart was prepared to receive the passion of love at an age when it would have been better for me to have been ignorant even of its existence. And this passion I was authorized to feel, and for a most engaging object! I leave you to judge how pleasant I found this permission; how much, young as I was, the idea of Seymour Pendarves now mixed itself with every thing I thought and did and said. Small was the chance, therefore, that even my highly honoured mother could ever succeed in changing the bent of these inclinations, which she had herself given in the pliant hours of childhood and earliest youth.

It was some time before Lady Helen recovered her spirits after the departure

of her son. I also gave myself the air of being very dejected: but as with me it was the season of "the tear forgot as soon as shed," and of the preponderating influence of animal spirits, I bounded over the lawn as usual after the first three days were gone by, and at length won Lady Helen from her reveries and her gloom; but I had the satisfaction of hearing the mothers say to each other,

"What sensibility! She really seemed to regret his absence with a sentimental dejection unusual at those years."

This idea, so flattering to my self-love, I took care to keep alive, by frequently inquiring how long it was to the Christmas vacation: and when that long-expected time arrived, and I found it settled that Lady Helen should meet her son at Lord Seymour's in London, and spend the holidays with him there, I gave way to the most violent lamentations, declar-

ing that she should not go without me. Nor in this instance did I at all exaggerate my feelings of disappointment; for Seymour's absence made a sad void in my amusements, and I had looked forward to his return with the sincerest satisfaction. But my entreaties and my expostulations were equally vain.

Seymour, however, wrote to me twice at least from London. These letters I treasured up with the fondest care, and read them once every day; though I could not but think there was not quite love enough in them, and that I was too big to be called little Helen, and to be told by my correspondent that he blew me a kiss. I remember also, that when I showed my mother my answers, which were those of a little old woman, and not of an artless girl, she used to say,

"I wonder where the child got these ideas."

When the holidays were over, Lady Helen returned, and brought me a beautiful writing-box as a present from her son, with a guitar as a present from herself. We immediately began our practice upon this instrument, and I made a rapid progress, from the hope of being able to charm Seymour when we next met.

But again Lady Helen went to meet her son in London, and it was not till two years after his first departure that he revisited the North. Never shall I forget the flutter which I felt at the idea of his return: but I am very sure that I was more taken up, in spite of my sentimentality, with thinking what effect I was likely to have on him at our meeting, than with the idea of the pleasure which I should have in seeing him. Two years had made a great improvement in my person; but I was not tall for my age, and

I was so thin that I looked much younger than I really was. My glass however, and the injudicious praises of flattering visiters had told me I was handsome; and I really believe I expected to take Seymour's heart, of the actual possession of which I had some doubts, by a *coup de main*, for I had both heard and read of "love at first sight." Never before had I been so difficult to please in the shape of my frocks, which I in vain tried to persuade my wiser mother to alter into *gowns*; as vainly did I try to persuade her to let me have my hair dressed, and wear ear-rings: she coolly told me simplicity was the beauty of a *child's dress;* and I, swallowing as I could that mortifying appellation, was obliged to let my auburn ringlets fall in natural glossy curls into my neck unfrizzed and untormented. But unable to keep my vexation to myself, to the great amusement of my mother, I said,

rather petulantly, as I was leaving the room one day, "Well, I must do as you please, mamma; but I am sure Mr. Seymour Pendarves, who is used to London young ladies, will think me a great fright."

"Mr. *who*, my dear? whose opinion is of so much consequence to you?"

"Seymour Pendarves," replied I blushing, and leaving out the *Mr*.

"Oh, Master Pendarves! Really, my dear, I can't think it matters much what such a mere boy as that thinks; and it is enough for you that you are a good child, and obey your mamma."

At length Seymour arrived, and the delighted Lady Helen brought her idol to our house; while I gazed with wonder as well as pleasure and embarrassment on the change which two years had made in my youthful companion. He, though only seventeen, had assumed the dress of

manhood. His throat was tied up with a large cravat; his hair was powdered, and worn in a club behind, according to the then fashion; his hat was set on one side, and he was dressed in a grass-green coat. Nothing so smart had ever met my sight before; and what with his fine teeth, his dimpled cheek, and his sparkling eyes, I thought I had never even *read* of any one so beautiful; and this lovely youth was intended to be my husband. But had he himself any such intentions? That I could not say: and I was both mortified and displeased at the way in which he first addressed me, even though I drew up my long neck as high as possible, to look as tall and womanly as I could. He flew up to me, calling me,

"Dear *little* Helen, how are you? I am so glad to see you again!"

And then, in spite of my dignity, he

clasped me round the neck, gave me a kiss which might have been heard in the next room, and left the mark of his metal sleeve buttons on my throat. My mother saw my confusion, and, as she did not approve such familiar and boisterous ways, coolly said, "My daughter is not used to such rough salutations, my dear Seymour, and I did not expect such a remnant of the great romping boy from you."

Alas! all remnant of youthful unrestraint and of the boy now vanished; natural feeling, which the sight of his early companion and play-fellow had called forth, disappeared, and the manners of the young men of the world *then* and *for ever* replaced them. But what provoked me was, though he seemed to consider himself as a *man*, he never even for a moment treated me as a *woman*. I was his 'little Helen,' and his 'chicken,' and his

'tiny pet,' and then, dreadful degradation! he used to chuck me under the chin: nay, once he asked me, pulling up his neck-cloth, and looking in the glass, whether the neighbourhood was improved, and whether there were any *fine women* in it, who visited our mothers.

"I had a mind to answer, "What does it signify to you, whether there are or not?" but as I dared not so reply, it was a relief to me when my mother came in, and put a stop to his inquiries.

But never indeed have I since felt more jealousy than I experienced during Seymour's residence at home in various ways. Soon after his return, I went with one of my cousins from Pendarves Castle, then on a visit to us, to a public walk in a neighbouring town, which was then much frequented, and Seymour accompanied us; I conscious that my straw hat and purple ribbands became me, and that my

young friend, who was remarkably plain, served only as a foil to my charms.

"Now then," thought I, "his hour is come." While glorying in this imagined security, I was hurled down into the depths of despair; for we scarcely reached the Mall, when we met some fine showy-looking women, whom I thought *old*, as they seemed past five-and-twenty. Seymour, to my great consternation, inquired who these *lovely creatures* were; declaring they were the handsomest women he had seen since he left London.

"My cousin can introduce you," said Harriet Pendarves.

"I! Not I, indeed."

"Why not, dear Helen?" cried Seymour.

"Because—because I have only lately known them."

"Oh, that is quite enough," he hastily returned; but I still refused.

However, the ladies returned, accompanied by a young man of Seymour's acquaintance; and in a few minutes we beheld him laughing and talking with the party. My feelings at that moment still live in my memory as vividly as ever. I was thunder-struck. What! Seymour Pendarves, the friend of my childhood, to leave me for women whom he never saw before; and call them handsomer than any thing he had seen since he left London! It was in vain that two youths of my acquaintance, one of them a young lord, joined my deserted side: I was silent, absent, and unhappy; for Seymour remained with his new acquaintance.

It never occurred to me to talk and laugh with my beaux, for I was a stranger to coquetry, and the natural feelings of my heart were allowed to display themselves: still an untaught delicacy made me try to hide the cause of my oddness from

my companions; and a head-ache, which was not feigned, was my excuse.

The ladies however at length left the walk, and Seymour was forced to return to us. He immediately launched forth into rapturous praises of their charms and elegant manners, while I listened in angry silence, as I had expected him to apologize for leaving me; and nothing, I perceived, was further from his thoughts.

"But what is the matter?" cried he. "Are you not well, Helen, that you do not speak?"

"Not quite."

"Helen has a head-ache," said my cousin.

"Poor child!" cried Seymour kindly: "then let us go home directly; it grows late, and I believe you do not sit up to supper yet, Helen, except on great occasions."

Here was an affront. I angrily re-

plied, "Indeed, Mr. Seymour Pendarves, you seem to know very little about me, and to *care* very little about me now."

"*Mr.* and a tossed up chin, and a flushed face! Why really, Helen, I find I did *not* know much about you: I took you for a sweet-tempered girl; but I have often thought you captious and pettish of late, and I never could imagine why: but let me tell you, Miss Helen Pendarves, that if you lose your good temper you will lose your greatest charm, *any* woman's *greatest charm.*"

This reproach I could not bear from him; for I knew, if I was become pettish and captious, affection for him was the cause; and I burst into tears. But struggling with my feelings, I sobbed out, "And I suppose, sir, you think I *have* no *other* charm than my good temper."

"*I,* Helen! No such thing; I think

quite the contrary; and I do assure you the ladies I have just left, they—"

"O yes!" cried I, "they, I suppose, have every charm possible."

"They have great charms certainly, both of face and person; still, they are only *fine women:*—but *you*, Helen, are quite a *little beauty*, only you are as yet but a *child*, you know."

Away went my ill-humours, and even my jealousy; for I was sure, though the boy of seventeen thought it more manly to talk to women grown, I knew as he advanced in life, and I too, he would be of a different opinion; and I also knew, a few years would fade the ladies whom he so much admired, while the same number of years would leave me still young, and *still a beauty*. Yes, he thought me a beauty, and he had told me so; and I repeated his words to myself so often, that in a reverie I once spoke them aloud,

and my mother asked, "Child, what are you saying about Helen, and beauty?"

"Helen was a great beauty, mamma, was she not?" said I, blushing at my own duplicity; but the subterfuge weighed heavily on my mind, nor could I rest till I told the whole truth to my mother, who in consideration of my ingenuousness merely observed to me, that when ,from the exaggeration to which even boys were much given, Seymour called me a beauty, he only meant I was a pretty girl; but *I* thought *differently*.

Seymour now remained at home full six months with a private tutor, as he was too old to go back to school, and Lady Helen thought him too young for Oxford. During that time, my mother from (as I suspected) some private information, began to form an unfavourable opinion of his steadiness of conduct; and the anxieties of a mother for his future

well-being clouded the still beautiful countenance of Lady Helen.

Once, as I was apparently engaged in reading, I overheard Lady Helen say to my mother, "Do *you* not discern any symptoms yet of a growing attachment on his side? he may be on his guard before me."

"None whatever; he seems to consider her still only as a beautiful child, and she is certainly not at all more womanly in her appearance this last year."

"I am sorry for it," was the answer; "for there is no guard so good for the morals of a young man as a virtuous attachment."

"Yes," said my mother; "and I had hoped that by being so much with Helen, he would have loved her as it were by anticipation."

I never could find out whether they *meant* me to hear this conversation or not; but the assurance which it con-

veyed that Seymour did not love me yet, was not lost upon me; and it is possible that all this was said for that purpose. The consequence was, that I put the strictest guard over my words and manners, lest Seymour should discover the attachment which I had with much confidence indulged, and the attachment itself, I resolved to resist with all the energy possible; for surely, thought I, if I am too young to inspire love, I ought to be too young to feel it; and I am too proud to love where I am not beloved. And I kept the former part of my resolution, for my attachment remained unsuspected; nor did its strength hold out entirely uninjured against the conviction of the utter indifference of its object. However, an affectionate grasp of my hand, and a respectful salute of my cheek, replaced th boisterous familiarity of his greeting when we first met.

"Surely," said I to myself, "his feelings towards me have undergone a change;" and while hope was thus restored to my bosom, I felt that my former feelings would on the slightest encouragement return with undiminished force.

I have since learnt, though not till long after the period in question, that Lady Helen had thought proper to have a conversation with her son on the subject nearest her heart—namely, a marriage between him and me in the course of a few years.

He listened to her, I found, with great surprise, but great complacency, only exclaiming, "But she is such a child at present, dear mother."

"But she will not always be a child," replied Lady Helen; "and though I believe she is quite indifferent to you *now*, I am much mistaken if that "child," as you call her, did not at your first arrival

feel something resembling love and jealousy too."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Seymour, "and I not to be conscious of it? *Dear* little Helen!" And then he recollected the scene in the walk, and my petulance, silence, and tears, for which he now accounted in a manner flattering to his vanity; and it was so new, so *piquant* to be loved by a child, that he was charmed with the idea of his conquest. But then Lady Helen had told him he had lost this affection; and as none can bear to renounce the power which they have once possessed, he was resolved to pay me those attentions by the want of which I had been alienated. He was too conscious, however, to be able to act upon his resolves, and he had learnt to consider me in so new a light, that he felt embarrassed when he should have been assiduous; and though I saw a change in his manner during the last four

days, it was far from being a favourable one. It was only on the last of the four days that he seemed to have shaken off the trammels which hung about him. That day, as I was drawing at the window, and he was reading aloud by his mother, I saw him lay down his book and whisper in her ear.

"Helen," said she, "what do you think Seymour says? He says, that he has now found out that you are no longer a child."

"Indeed!" replied I, blushing, but in a tone of pique; "and since when? That is a discovery which I have long made."

"And since when have you *yourself* made it, dear Helen?" said he, with that saucy smile of his which you have often said was irresistible.

"These four years at least," I answered, trying to avoid his eyes.

"Do not fib, Helen," was his impertinent reply.

"You make Helen blush, my dear son."

"So much the better: she never looks so beautiful as when she blushes; and I dare say some little time hence we shall have some English Priam exclaiming of this modern Helen,

'No wonder, Britons, that such heavenly charms
For ten long years have set the world in arms.'

While *I* shall sit and sing

'Ah, Chloris! could I now but sit
As unconcern'd as when
Thy infant beauty could beget
Nor happiness, nor pain!'"

I was now so pleased, so confounded, yet so happy, that I knew not where to look or how to behave; but, remembering that the "*best part of valour is discretion*," I fled from the danger I could not face, and had just presence of mind enough to run away.

"What is the matter with Helen?" cried Seymour, when I was gone.

"Is she angry?"

"No," replied Lady Helen, more skilled in the nature of woman's feelings; "she is only conscious of being too much pleased—that's all:" and from that moment, had not Seymour left us the next day, the chances are that we should soon have become lovers.

I, meanwhile, had gone into my own chamber, where I found my mother: I threw myself into her arms without saying a word, and hid my blushes and my tears in her bosom. My mother, untold, knew those tears were not tears of sorrow, and soon drew from me a part of the truth; for I told her Seymour had been so full of his compliments, that I came away.

During the course of that day Seymour was continually exclaiming, "How provoking it is that I should be forced to go away just now!"

"Ah," cried I, pertly enough, and insincerely too, "what will poor Miss Salter do?" That was the name of one of the ladies with whom he had fancied himself charmed.

"Miss Salter!

'I think not of Miss Salter——
My fancy has no image now but—"

Here my mother rather pettishly interrupted him.

"I think, for Miss Salter's sake, young man, it is well you are going, as you certainly took great pains to make her think you admired her: and I must say I am no friend to coquetry, be it in man or woman."

"Nor I," said Lady Helen; "and I trust the next time my son makes love he will do it with his whole heart, and not mistake the illusions of fancy for the dictates of attachment."

"I trust so too, my dear mother," he replied, "and that the object will be one whom you approve."

The next morning he set off, and every thing at first seemed a blank to me. He wrote frequently during the first weeks of his residence at Oxford: but my mother discouraged my answering his letters, and he soon grew remiss in his correspondence even with Lady Helen, who found that his allowance, though handsome, was insufficient for his wants, and suspected that the life must be dissipated which required such an exorbitant expenditure. My mother knew that it was so: why she imparted what she heard to her friend I cannot tell, because it made Lady Helen unhappy, and she wrote to her son in the language of expostulation. I was vexed to find that my mother gave such implicit credence to the stories of Seymour's errors, as the accounts might

be exaggerated; and when I had once admitted that he was the victim of misrepresentation, pity for Seymour added force to my attachment.

It seemed a very long time to me till the next vacation came; but Seymour passed it in London, at his grandfather's: my mother was glad, but I was disappointed. Nor did he come down into the country till half of the long vacation was expired; and after he had spent a week with Lady Helen, my mother took me to pay a visit to a relation of hers. In vain Lady Helen remonstrated, and Seymour entreated: she replied that she had put off her journey in the expectation of seeing him in June, and she could no longer delay her visit. He sighed, looked conscious and confused, and forbore to urge her again.

My mother was certainly right in thus resolving; for she knew, though I did not,

that Lady Helen had communicated to him her views and wishes with regard to me; and she left home with a firmness and decision of manner which promised ill, Lady Helen thought, for the success of her hopes.

When we came back, Seymour was returned to Oxford. The following Christmas Lady Helen, whose health seemed evidently declining, went to London for the advice of physicians, and Seymour attended her home; but he only staid a week, as he was under an engagement, he said, to accompany some friends abroad. He departed however with evident dejection and reluctance, and seemed while with us to enjoy the quiet of our domestic scenes: but as his actions were not regulated by a steady principle of *right*, and under the restraint of moral and religious obligation, no sooner was he removed from our purifying influence,

than he became again the follower of pleasure; while, as he was driven backward and forward upon the ocean of the world, my image, which his poor mother thought would save him from temptation, appeared to him only as a beacon at a distance to remind him of that shore of safety which the waves forbad him, however much he wished it, to approach. During the next term, and in spite of his dissipation, Seymour obtained a prize for writing the best prose essay; and he sent it to his mother just after some very unfavourable accounts of the society which he frequented in London had reached her, and had been only too strongly confirmed by my mother's secret informant. These reports had not been communicated to me; but I happened to be present when Lady Helen received two copies of the essay, accompanied by a letter, in which he begged that his dearest friend Helen would not

only accept but do him the favour to criticise the little production which he had sent, as he knew no one whose praise he should so highly value, or to whose censures he should pay greater attention. Methinks I still see the delight, yet gleaming mournfully through tears, which beamed from Lady Helen's countenance when she received the essay, and read the letter. Alas! that renewed and increased brightness was but too like the flame of an expiring taper.

"My dear Julia," cried she to my mother, in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, "what a foolish thing is a fond mother's heart! Now it is all fear, and now all hope; now it is broken, and now healed again. This boy, this dear, naughty good boy! it was but yesterday I cried for his weakness, and now I cry for his strength."

"No one, I believe, ever doubted your

son's talents," said my mother coldly, and I thought crossly.

"True," replied Lady Helen meekly; "and this prize, I own, is not proof of amended conduct."

"I know not," cried I eagerly, "what fault poor Seymour has committed; but of this I am sure, that if he was so very idle as ill-natured people say he is, he could not have found time to write for a prize, and still less have been able to gain it."

"Thank you, my dearest girl, for being my poor boy's advocate; for what you say is very just; and Seymour shall know how kindly you took his part."

"I must beg he may not know," said my mother angrily.

"Indeed!" answered Lady Helen, mournfully. "But I cannot now blame your change of feeling on this subject, for I myself should hesitate to give my daugh-

ter to a youth such as Seymour is said to be."

I now turned round and looked at Lady Helen with so alarmed and inquiring a countenance, that she could not withstand the appeal. She took my hand and said,

"Yes, Helen, your mother and I had pledged our words to each other to do all in our power to promote a union between my son and you, and to cherish every symptom in you of a mutual attachment; but now, owing to some too well founded reports, I fear, of his faulty conduct, she wishes to retract her promise; and here, as one of my last acts and deeds (for I feel I shall not be with you long) I solemnly give her back that promise in your presence! declaring to you, my beloved child, that unless your mother thinks Seymour deserving of you, I cannot wish you to

be his wife; and that it will be my parting injunction to you, Helen, never, never to marry an immoral man."

Lady Helen had scarcely said this, while I listened with downcast eyes, when my mother threw herself into her arms, sobbing out convulsively, "My own dear generous friend, for your sake I will try to think well of your son, and to believe he will reform—only don't talk of dying; I can't bear *that*."

"But I wish to prepare you for it."

"Prepare, Helen! prepare! Do you think any thing can make me endure the idea of losing you? Oh! it will be losing all I ever loved a second time."

Lady Helen shook her head, but did not speak; for she knew that her friend must soon undergo this dreaded trial, and *she* too felt that for *some* blows there is no such thing as *preparation*.

The night that followed was the first

of real agonizing sorrow which I had ever known. I had heard that Seymour was believed even by his own mother to be unworthy of me, and that mine was decidedly averse to that union which she had originally made the first desire of my heart; I had also heard from Lady Helen's own lips, a solemn assurance that she was dying.

At my time of life, however, the spirits are never long depressed, especially by an uncertain and remote sorrow; but as a captive butterfly, when the pressure on its wings is removed, flutters them again in air with all their glittering dyes and buoyancy uninjured, so do the spirits of youth quickly resume their brilliancy and their elasticity.

When I rose the next morning, I was *sure* that Lady Helen would *recover;* I was sure that Seymour would *reform,* even if the reports concerning him were

not exaggerated; and I was also sure, that some time or other I should be his wife.

But, alas! Lady Helen had not spoken from momentary dejection, and still less from the ungenerous wish to excite interest and alarm in the hearts that tenderly loved her: she spoke from her deep conviction, a conviction only too well founded.

In less than two months she was attacked by fever and inflammation of the brain, such as had before seized her on the death of her husband: she had, however, lucid intervals; and though my mother and myself felt our hearts wrung by her delirious ravings, during which she called upon her son's name in the most affecting language, still we suffered more, when, on recovering her senses, she asked for this darling son,

and we were obliged to reply that he was not yet arrived!

And where, oh! where was he at a moment like that! We knew not.

As soon as Lady Helen's attack was judged to be a dangerous one, my mother wrote to him at Oxford, desiring him to set off immediately, or he might come too late; and as Oxford was only a ten hours journey from home, he might have been with us the next morning, had he been at college. It was also term time; but yet he came *not*, though on such an occasion leave of absence was easily to be obtained. My mother was too angry to be as wretched as I was at this distressing circumstance; for indignation often swallows up every other feeling; and once she hinted to me, that he must have received the letter, and that mere idle neglect kept him away: but

the poor invalid, who unsuspected by us overheard our conversation, exclaimed,

"No, Julia, whatever are his other faults, my poor boy loves me, tenderly loves me; and even from a sick-bed he would hasten to his dying mother. Oh, no, he has never received your letter—he is not in college."

"Then where is he? In college he ought to be."

"True, Julia, but he is young and thoughtless; and we ought to remember that we were so *once ourselves*. We ought not to have run away from our parents. Yet we *did* so, Julia."

"We did, indeed," cried my mother, abashed and silenced.

"Yes," continued Lady Helen; "and therefore I have always endeavoured to be mild in my judgement of other people, especially of the young."

"Helen!" cried my mother, "forgive

me, thou blessed spirit! I will be merciful to him, even though it makes me unjust to—"

"No; your first duty is to your daughter: but listen to me, Julia! Be *sure* to convince Seymour, when I am no more, that I did not impute his absence to want of love, but merely to *accident*. Be *sure* you do! for he will feel only too much when he comes and finds that he has no longer a mother!"

The afflicting image thus presented to my mind of what would be Seymour's misery if he indeed arrived too late, was more than I could bear, and I was forced to leave the room. Soon afterwards, Lady Helen's senses wandered again, but when I returned, she was sensible, though exhausted; and as I entered, she hastily put back the curtain, and said,

"Oh! I hoped it was my dear, dear boy!" Her breath now grew fainter, and

she wildly exclaimed, "Oh! where, where is he? must I die without seeing him once more, and giving him my blessing? Helen, Julia, be sure to speak very kindly to him, and tell him that I blessed him. But thy will, O Lord, be done!"

Still, as long as consciousness remained, her eyes were anxiously turned towards the door, as if looking for that beloved object whom she was never more to see, we thought, in this world. At this moment, however, my watchful ear heard a quick step on the stairs, and an exclamation of agony not mistaken by me.

"*He* is *here*—I am *sure* he is here," cried I, bending over her pillow; and in another moment Seymour was on his knees at the bed-side. Never shall I forget his look of speechless woe when he found her last agony approaching; but it seemed as if *affection* struggled successfully with death for a few short moments.

She could not speak, but her eyes were eloquent; and as she laid her hand upon the head of her child, those eyes were raised to Heaven in earnest supplication; they then turned on him, while she reclined her head on my mother's bosom, and her right hand was clasped in mine. I cannot go on: the scene is still too present to my view.

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Deep as was my affliction, it sunk into nothingness, compared with that of the bereaved and self-reproving son. It was really a *relief* to me to see his sense of anguish suspended by insensibility.

When he recovered, there was something so full of woe, and yet of a woe so stern in the look with which my mother ordered me away, that I had not the heart to resist it. It was near an hour before she came to me, and never before had I seen her so overpowered with afflic-

tion. She called on Lady Helen by the tenderest names; talked of her patient gentleness, of the sweetness of that temper which she had so often tried, and reproached herself for having thus tried it. But she spoke not of Seymour; and deep as my regret was for the dead, it was equalled by my anxiety for the living. I therefore ventured to say, "But how is poor Seymour?"

"Unfeeling girl!" cried my mother; "you can think only of him when his angel mother lies dead!"

"*She* would have *thanked* me for my anxiety," I replied, rendered courageous by distress. "I shall go and inquire after him."

"Hold, Helen! He is extremely wretched; so much so, that I could not bear to listen to his self-upbraidings, nor to witness his caresses of that hand which replied no longer to his grasp; and then

his wild entreaties, that she would speak to him once more, and say that she forgave him!"

"And could you have the cruelty to leave him alone in such state?" cried I. "Do you think his mother would so have left *your* child?"

My mother started—"You are right," she said; "I will return, and do my duty by him."

"Oh! let me go with you."

"No, Helen; I must do my duty by you too—and the poor youth at this moment is only too dangerous."

She was right, and I submitted; but I had gained my point, and she was gone back to the poor afflicted one. Before she went, however, she insisted on my going to bed; where, wearied with three nights of watching, I fell into a heavy slumber. But oh! that wretchedness on waking which attends the recollection of

a recent affliction! and I was giving way to all the misery I felt, when, soon after eight in the morning, my mother came into my room.

She told me she had not been in bed all night, for that she dared not leave Seymour.

"How kind it was in you, my dearest mother!"

"No, it was only right," she answered in great agitation: "he was a bitter and penitent sufferer; and if my departed friend is conscious of what is passing here, I trust that she was satisfied with me, for I tried to do a mother's part by him. And now, my dear child, we must both return home. This, you know, is no place for you, Helen."

"And must I go without taking leave of poor Seymour?"

"What leave is there to take?"

I had nothing to reply, and we came away.

As my mother knew that Seymour's sleep was likely to be long, she did not return to the house of death for some hours; but when she did, I earnestly conjured her to let me accompany her. I pleaded, however, and wept in vain. In vain did I urge, that Seymour would think me unkind in forsaking him wholly at such a time as this was.

My mother said she feared that Seymour would only be too ready to attribute his not seeing me to her commands, rather than my own inclinations; and disappointed and wretched I threw myself on the bed in an agony of grief, and never rose from it, feeding my distress by every means in my power. I must own, however, that temper and contrivance had some share in this self-abandonment, or sensibility which I thought would at once punish my mother for her obstinacy (as I called it), and induce

her to give up her resolution. How often is grief, like love, made up of materials which we dream not of, and how often has temper much to do with it! But my seeming unmixed sorrow had no effect on my excellent parent, whose decisions where I was concerned were the result of firm principle. Her first observation was,

"This excessive misery, Helen, accompanied as I see it is with a degree of sullenness, is not likely to make me change my purpose, but rather to confirm me in it the more; because it proves to me the great extent of the danger to which my compliance would expose you, when you can thus in spirit at least be rebellious; and this at a time, too, when I want every comfort possible."

These words subdued every particle of resentment in me; I threw myself on her neck, and assured her she should never

have so to reproach me again; nor did I even venture to inquire for Seymour,—but she was generous enough to speak of him unasked. She told me he woke, after a long sleep, more composed than she expected; "though on his first waking he startled me excessively," she said, "by asking for his mother, and wondering to see me instead of her. My tears seemed to force back his recollection, and in a faint voice, and with a look of wretchedness, he added 'Ah! I remember now,' and hiding his face in the pillow he wept aloud.'

"And I, I was but a sad consoler, for I wept in silence by him. When he was calm again, I wished him to rise; and before I left him, in the fulness and tenderness of my heart, poor child! I stooped down and kissed his burning forehead. But I soon repented, for he exclaimed, 'Oh! that was so like *her!* But she

never, no, never more'—and again he lay almost convulsed with his feelings.

"When this fresh paroxysm was over, I left him."

"But I am sure," said I, "that he will be soothed by that kind kiss in remembrance, though it affected him painfully at the time."

"Perhaps so; but his grief, violent though it be, will soon go off, and be after a time forgotten. Lady Helen was his mother, and he loved her; but she had not been the chosen play-fellow of his childhood, the friend of his youth, the companion of his riper years, the sharer of every joy, the soother of every sorrow, and the being endeared to him by daily and confidential intercourse; and yet all these was she to *me*, Helen!"

"But, dearest mother, the love and regrets of a child are *very* strong."

"I own it, Helen; especially when, as in the case of this miserable boy, self-re-

proach mingles with them, and deepens every pang. Helen, my child, my only treasure now," she added, speaking with difficulty, "never, never, when I shall be as she is now, may you have cause to shed such tears as his, Helen! Remember, there are no upbraidings so terrible as those of one's own heart; and for your own sake, if not for mine, be dutiful!"

I was too much affected to reply; and my mother continued, "Yes, *he* will recover his loss; you will recover *yours*, Helen. But what can ever replace to me the loss of the friend of my whole life, the sole relic of the joys that are past? George, Charles, Helen, you are all gone now! and I (here she raised her arms with a sort of appealing look to heaven), I stand alone unsupported, and unsupporting too, like the sole remaining pillar of a once noble temple, to speak of former pride and present desolation."

As my mother's imagnation had now entered into play, my fears for her health in a great degree vanished; for I knew that the grief, which can vent itself in imagery, however gloomy, is not of that sort which preys rapidly on life; for it is

"the grief that doth not speak——
Falls on the burthen'd heart and bids it break."

Taking advantage of a pause, during the first part of which my mother seemed engaged in fervent devotion, I now ventured to ask her if Seymour had inquired why he did not see me. She told me that he had, and that he had been told in reply there were sufficient reasons for our not meeting; amongst the foremost of which was the certainty that we should make each other *worse*, and with this reason he had seemed satisfied. She did not tell me, however, that he inquired for me every day; nor did she relate to me any of their conversations,

except the one which took place the evening before the funeral; and *that* she felt it to be her duty to disclose.

"I have to inform you, my dear child," said she, "that when Seymour and I stood together to take our last look and last kiss before the coffin was closed, he suddenly seized my hand, and, wildly addressing the unconsious dead, conjured that pale cheek, and that closed eye, to appeal to my heart in his favour, and to remind me of the promise pledged to his mother to promote his union with you. This was the language of passion, and there was stage effect in it, I thought. Neither of which, you know, can affect me. I therefore replied, though not without emotion, that it was a subject which I could not discuss in that room. Accordingly, after he had taken many more last looks and leaves of the beloved dead, I led him from the chamber.

"When he was calmed a little, I had resolution to resume the conversation; and to own the truth, Helen, I was *glad* to discuss it, without the presence of that mournful object which, spite of myself, armed my feelings against my judgement."

Here my mother walked about the room in considerable agitation; but she soon recovered herself.

"I then related to him our conversation with Lady Helen."

"And did you tell him how I defended him?" cried I.

"No; certainly I did not," she coldly replied; "but I convinced him that his mother gave me back my promise, and that her last parting words to yourself should be, 'Helen, never marry an immoral man.' On hearing this, he exclaimed,

"'Did my mother say this? Did she think me an immoral man? Oh! insupportable agony! Well, madam,' added he, turning fiercely round, 'and so I suppose you have said the same to your daughter, and have engaged her to combat the regard she once felt for me; for I know she loved me once, or would have done so, for so the lips that never deceived assured me: but mark me, madam, I will not take a refusal from any lips but hers.'

"'If you wish to alienate my affection entirely from you, Seymour,' I replied, 'you will make this appeal to Helen; for neither by letter nor personal application will I sanction it, till I am convinced your improved conduct makes you more worthy of my daughter.'

"'But you deny me the motive to improvement, by forbidding my addresses to her.'

"'O, Seymour!' answered I, 'if you have no *better* motive, such a change is not to be depended upon, nor would I intrust to you, under such a precarious alteration, the happiness of my child.'

"He looked distressed, but rather proudly replied,

"'Well, madam, we will talk further on this subject some other time. I cannot pursue it now.' And soon after I took my leave."

"And will you not allow him to have one interview with me before he returns to Oxford?"

"No; I will not expose you to his dangerous eloquence: as he is not really in love with you, he would have more self-possession, and plead his cause so much the better."

"*Not* in love with me?"

"No; his attachment is now irritated

by obstacles, and also stimulated by fancied duty; but could he, if he really felt a virtuous passion, maintain a disgraceful connexion in London, as I know him to do? Helen, my child! what ails you?" Here her voice sounded like thunder in my ears, and I fainted.

I had certainly been led to believe that Seymour led a life of general dissipation, and I had not allowed myself to attempt to define the exact nature of the charges against him; but when I heard him positively accused of an improper attachment to one individual object, a mixed feeling of jealousy, disgust, misery, and indignation came over me with the sickness of death, and for the first time in my life I lost all consciousness. How long I remained insensible, I know not; but when I recovered, I found my mother weeping over me, not because she *had* feared for

my life, but because he *did* fear for my peace of mind. She was consoled, however, when I assured her, that from that moment I should think it my duty to drive Seymour Pendarves from my mind; and that I had no longer any difficulty in submitting to her wishes. She kissed me, called me her dear good girl, and we parted for the night.

The next morning was the morning of the funeral. Lady Helen had desired it might be a private one, and had she not, it could not have been otherwise: for Lord Seymour, though not an old man, was fallen into a state of imbecility; Lord Mountgeorge was at Lisbon, attending his dying wife; and Mr. Pendarves, our great uncle, was confined in Cornwall by the gout.

"Poor Seymour!" cried my mother, as she heard this account of the family; "there is much to be said in your ex-

cuse; for how completely has he been left to himself amidst the dangers of a metropolis!"

My mother when she said this was certainly *thinking aloud;* but my hearing her had at that moment no bad effect on me, as my jealousy remained unappeased, and my mortification unsoothed, and nothing could re-instate him as yet in my estimation; nay, I believed I should see him the next day without any emotion that could be attributed to him as the cause of it.

When we reached the house of mourning, we found Seymour anxiously expecting us. On seeing me he seized my hand, and, unable to speak, kissed it repeatedly, then turned away in tears; and, I must own, at that moment I forgot his unworthiness and my own resolutions, and remembered only his sorrow and his apparent affection. My mother *might*

be right, but I began to suspect she *might be wrong*. All these feelings, however, were soon swallowed up in those of deep and tender sorrow. The procession began; and, clinging to each other's arm for support, my mother and I followed the unsteady steps of the chief mourner. But why need I dwell on the details of a scene so common? Suffice, that Seymour did not return with us. He remained in the church, in order to give way to the lately suppressed agonies of his heart. My mother wished to do the same; but she respected the sacredness of his sorrow, and she could visit the vault at another time.

The rest of the day was spent by Seymour in visits to those who had been maintained or assisted by Lady Helen, in order that he might personally assure them that his intention was to do all she would have done, had life been spared to

her. Having thus performed his duty to the utmost, he appeared to my mother's eye to have recovered some of his usual brilliancy of countenance. The next night he was to return to Oxford. In the afternoon of that day he called at our house, and requested to see my mother and *me*.

I rose involuntarily in great perturbation.

"Tell Mr. Pendarves," said my mother, "that I will wait on him directly. Helen, my child! it is but one struggle more, and all the difficulty will be over; for I conclude, you not only in obedience to my will, but in compliance with your own wise *wishes*, refuse to see him?"

What could I say? Could I tell her that the meeting of yesterday, and his subsequent conduct towards his mother's dependants, had altered my feelings? I could not do it, and I remained above stairs.

After a long conference my mother came back to me, and I heard the hall-door close. Till this moment I had hoped she would relent, and allow me to see him; at least I guess so, from the cold chill which I felt at my heart when I heard the noise of the closed door: however, I saw him from the window, I myself unseen, and his handkerchief was held to his eyes.

When my mother returned, I observed that she had been excessively moved, and the traces of recent tears were on her cheeks.

"Helen!" she at length said, "I trust I have done by Seymour Pendarves what I should wish a friend to do by a child of mine. And is he not *her* child, the child of that lost, matchless being whom I loved only second to yourself, since one dearer than either was removed from me? Yes; I admonished him as a

mother would have done; and though I refused his requests, I did it, indeed I did, with gentleness and with anguish." "Helen," she resumed, "if ever you should doubt the affections of your mother, remember what for your sake she has undergone this day. She has, though her heart bled to do it, wounded that of one whom she loves now next to yourself, and that one, too, the child of her adored Lady Helen. But the sense of a mother's duty, aided by a higher power, has supported me through it."

"And he is gone!"

"Yes; and he reproached me bitterly for my cruelty, Helen: but if he could see me now, do you think he would censure me for hardness of heart?"

Mournful were the hours that followed, and we retired early to rest. But my mother rested not: I heard her walking backward and forward in her room till

near day-break; and till she had ceased I was too uneasy to close my eyes.

When I rose the next day, and was walking in the garden before breakfast, I found my mother's windows still shut, and it was very late before she came down stairs. I had previously felt disposed to indulge my own dejection; but as soon as I saw her, all thought of myself vanished: for never did I see the expression of hopeless grief stronger than in her speaking face. As she did not talk, I vainly tried to converse of indifferent things. She smiled; but every smile was succeeded by a sigh; and once she exclaimed,

"No! they cannot come to *me*, but I shall go to *them*."

"Dearest mother," cried I, rising and looking up in her face, "you forget *me*. Surely you do not wish to leave me?"

"Do not ask me," she cried, clasping

me fondly to her bosom; "I fear I am ungrateful for my remaining blessing."

From that time she struggled with her grief, and became, as you know, in *company* at least, the agreeable companion; for about that time it was, I think, that your amiable husband succeeded to the living, and you came to enliven and adorn the rectory. However, as your friend for whose inspection this is written, does not know any of the subsequent events, I shall proceed with the detail of my story.

During the ensuing six weeks we had only one letter from Seymour, but that was a pleasant one: for he told us that he had been studying very hard, and had gotten another prize, and he sent us his composition, adding in a very touching manner, that as the eye which he most wished to please by his production was for ever closed, his proudest desire now

was to have it approved by those whom he and she best loved.

My mother was gratified by this compliment as well as myself; for she augured favourably of his amendment from this close application, and she owned to me in the fulness of her heart, that she had informed him, his obtaining my hand depended entirely on *himself*. I have said that my mother appeared quite recovered in company; but such was the constant recurrence of one anxious subject to her mind in private, that every thing unconnected with it soon became uninteresting to her: this was the renewal of virtuous friendship in another world; and she read and tried to procure every thing in the shape of Sermon or Essay that had ever been written on the subject. One sermon, and it is a most eloquent one, bearing the title, "The renewal of Vir-

tuous Friendship in another World *," delighted her so much, that it was never out of her reach; and though she found it difficult to deduce from the Scriptures any certain grounds for this consoling doctrine, still she delighted to indulge in it; and as she could never rest till she had tried to convert others to her own opinions, especially where those opinions were likely to increase individual happiness, those only with whom she was not intimate could avoid hearing her descant on this subject, with all that plausible and ingenious fluency which usually attends reasoning from analogy and imagination. While her mind was thus employed, it ceased to prey on its own peace; and though her system sometimes failed to satisfy her, she still found a soothing

* See a volume of Sermons written by the Rev. P. Houghton.

conviction in the thought, that should we not be permitted "to know and love our friends in heaven," we should be sure not to be *conscious* of the want of those who had been the dearest to us when on earth, but should find all the "ways of God" vindicated "to man."

It was now, while my mother was too constantly thinking of the regretted dead, and I of the still tenderly remembered living, that a new acquaintance was introduced to us, who had power to withdraw our thoughts from these interesting speculations, and fix them for some time at least upon himself.

Methinks, my dear friend, I see you smile at this distance, and remark to your husband, "Now we shall see what she says of the impression which Count Ferdinand De Walden first made on her, for I never could understand how she could ever prefer another man to him."

You forget how very early in life my affections were turned towards Pendarves, and how soon I learnt to look on constancy in love as a sort of virtue; you also forget the "fascinating graces," and the "irresistible archness," to use your own expression, of Seymour's smile. But this is perhaps an ill-timed digression. Where was I? Oh! at the introduction of a new acquaintance.

My parents had made an acquaintance in America with the Count De Walden the elder, whom curiosity and the love of travelling had led thither. On the breaking out of the war, he returned to his native country, Switzerland, by way of England; where he was so much pleased with the manners of the people and constitution of the government, that he resolved his nephew and heir, Ferdinand De Walden, who was like himself a protestant, should come over and enter himself at one of the

universities. When the time for his admission arrived, the count remembered with renewed interest his acquaintance with my parents and their cousins; and that they now resided in England. Nor was it difficult for him to obtain particulars of their present residence and situation.

His uncle heard with pain that my mother, Seymour and myself, were the only survivors of that happy family which he had so much loved in the new world. To my mother, however, he was still anxious to introduce his nephew; and he hoped that in Seymour he would find a durable friend at college; but in this expectation he could not be gratified, as he had resolved that Ferdinand should go to the mathematical university, and Seymour was of Oxford. This impossibility my mother thought a fortunate circumstance for Ferdinand.

When De Walden came, and showed,

among other letters, one of recommendation to Mr. Seymour Pendarves, she coldly observed, "That letter need not be delivered yet:" and certainly the appearance of Ferdinand De Walden did not promise much congeniality of disposition and pursuit with Seymour; for the latter, from the light gaiety of his manner and countenance, seemed as if he never thought at all; and the former, from the grave pensiveness and reserve of his, appeared at first sight as if he did nothing but think. The open eye of Seymour invited confidence, the penetrating one of De Walden repelled it; and as the one when first seen was sure to inspire admiration, if not love, the other was as sure to excite alarm, if not a feeling resembling aversion. For myself, I must own that when De Walden was presented to me by my mother, I experienced towards him a little of the first, though none of

the second sensation; for I had been accustomed to look on Seymour as my model for personal beauty and captivation; and the young Swiss therefore had not a chance of charming me at first sight. I had not seen my mother so animated for years as she was on the arrival of her foreign guest; for she had greatly esteemed his uncle, and Ferdinand strongly resembled him. With him of course were associated the ever remembered hours of youth and friendship, wedded love and happiness; and De Walden shone with a radiance not his own. But my mother, much to my annoyance, was not conscious of this: she insisted that his brilliancy was all self-derived; that if she had never known *his uncle* she should have admired *him*. By this admiration I am ashamed to confess I was piqued and mortified, because I fancied it interfered with the rights of Seymour; and I suspected that if he should repay the regard of

the mother by loving the daughter, I could not without disobedience remain constant to my first attachment.

As De Walden was not to go to college till October, he had leave to stay with us till that time, since it was rather an unusual thing for a fine young man, unless he was a relation, to be the guest of a widow lady and her daughter for so long a period. I was therefore certain that my mother must have some particular point to carry, and that point was, I believed, the alienation of my heart from Seymour Pendarves. These suspicions certainly made me regard Ferdinand the two first days of his arrival with prejudiced eyes, not unmixed with fear of his keenness of penetration. But in spite of myself, my fear of him vanished, and much of my prejudice with it, when I found that this grave sententious personage, who talked theology with my mother, and tried, poor man! to explain to us some new German philosophy, could

laugh as heartily as if he never read and never thought, and had a sense of the ridiculous, which he found sometimes dangerous and troublesome to his good breeding.

This welcome discovery happened to me at breakfast, while he was reading to us aloud some amusing extracts from a kind of periodical paper published in France by the Baron de Grimm, one of which was so ludicrous that he laid down the book to laugh at his ease, while I exclaimed, "Is it possible?"

"Is what possible, my dear?" said my mother.

"That Mr. De Walden," I repeated rather uncivilly, "can laugh so very heartily."

"*N'est-il pas permis en Angleterre, Mademoiselle* *?" was his answer.

"Oh, yes!" said I, blushing, and looking very foolish, only—"

"*Oh! Je comprends: apparemment*

* Is it not permitted in England?

c'est Mademoiselle qui ne veut pas qu'on rit devant elle. Hélas, belle Helène! il faut rire tant qu'on le peut, quand on a le bonheur de jouir souvent de votre aimable société; car il me semble qu'en ce cas là, on pourroit bien avoir raison de pleurer bientôt, et peut-être pour la vie.*"

Here was *gallantry* too, and returning good for evil; though I was rude, he was polite. I was humbled and ashamed, while he with increasing archness said, "*Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire avec votre* 'Is it possible†?' What! you think me a disciple of Crassus, and fancy me never laugh till I see an ass eat a thistle?" he added in his foreign English.

* Oh! I comprehend: you do not like any should laugh in your presence. Alas! beautiful Helen, one must laugh while one can, when one has the happiness of being in your society; for one runs the risk of crying very soon, and perhaps for life.

† But what did you mean with your 'Is it possible?'

"Shall I tell you what I take you for now?" replied I, venturing to look up in his face, which, for the first time, animated as it now was by pleasantry and the consciousness of appearing to advantage, struck me with the conviction of its excessive physiognomical beauty; and I ceased to wonder at my mother's regard for him, not because he was possessed of great personal attractions, but because beauty of physiognomy cannot exist without corresponding beauty of mind, if not of heart."

"Well," he replied, "and what do you take me for?" speaking with that accent which in him I have often thought an additional charm.

"A kind-hearted man and a good Christian; for you returned good for evil, and repaid impertinence by making it the foundation of a compliment. Still, I must presume again, and tell you that I believe

your laughs are like *jours de fête*; they do not come *every* day."

"*Pour les jours de fête, non; ils ne me sont point venus tous les jours que depuis mon arrivée ici; mais à présent, Mademoiselle, tous les jours sont pour moi des jours de fête, et ma sainte est Sainte Helène* *."

I was not yet old enough to know how to receive compliments like these without embarrassment; and to hide my awkwardness I exclaimed, "Why, what can have become of them? I have lost them; they are quite gone."

"*Qu'avez-vous perdu, Mademoiselle? Permettez-moi de le chercher. Dites donc* †."

"My fear and awe of you."

* For holidays, no: they never came to me every day, till I came hither; but now all days are holidays to me, and my saint is Saint Helen.

† But what are you seeking? let me look for it. Tell me.

"Fear and awe of me! *Oh! qu'ils s'en aillent tout de bon. Ce ne sont pas les sentiments que je voudrais vous inspirer pour moi* *." As he said this, there was an expression in his dark eyes which made me turn mine away; and addressing my mother, I told her that our guest reminded me of a little French paper toy which I had seen, called *deux têtes sous un bonnet*; that at first view it was a monk with a cowl on, but that when the cowl was thrown off, there was a gay and smiling young man. So it was with Mr. De Walden: when he first came he seemed a grave philosopher, and now he is an absolute lover of fun, and a laugher of the first order.

"*De grace, Mademoiselle, dites-moi lequel des deux caractères vous plaît le*

* Oh, let them go away entirely! These are not the sentiments with which I wish to inspire you.

plus; mais, ne me dites pas, je vous le demande en grâce, que je vous offense le moins dans mon rôle de philosophe; Hélas! auprès de vous qui pourroit rester philosophe * *?*"

"I wish you," said I, "to resemble Democritus, who united the two characters of laugher and philosopher; and you, ifyou please, shall be the latter with my mother: you shall talk wisely and gravely with her, but laugh and talk nonsense now and then with me."

"*Vous convenez donc de la justice de ma proposition, qu'auprès de vous on ne peut être philosophe* †?"

I shook my head and held up my

* In pity tell me which of these two characters pleases you the most; but pray do not tell me that I offend you less as a philosopher, for who that is near you can long remain a philosopher?

† You agree then to the justice of my proposition, that near you no one can remain a philosopher?

hand at him, not knowing exactly how to answer; he seized it, and pressed it fervently to his lips. My mother, I saw, enjoyed this dialogue; but my own heart reproached me for having allowed myself to be amused and flattered into a sort of infidelity to Seymour, by a man too who would be, I foresaw, warmly encouraged by my mother.

By this conversation, which has never been effaced from my memory, you will suspect that my flippancy and the evident pleasure with which I kept it up, were proofs that nothing but a prior attachment could have preserved my affections from the power of De Walden, when he once displayed to me all the variety of his talents and the graces of his mind. Even as it was, they would have had a more certain effect, but for the injudicious eagerness with which my mother tried to force a conviction of them upon me; for then

my alarmed feelings took the part of Seymour, and I was piqued into underrating her idol, because she seemed to *overrate* him. How very rarely is it that one can obtain or give an opinion uninfluenced by temper, prejudice, or interest!

"Is he not very handsome?" she used to say.

"Yes, but I have seen a handsomer man."

"Oh, you mean Seymour; he is handsomer certainly, but then he is not near so tall."

"No, but he is better made."

"That *I* never remarked; and I hope you will only impart the result of your observation to *me:* others might think it indelicate. What a fine countenance he has!"

"Yes, *sometimes*, but not always; and I prefer one that is always so: I like *perpetual* rather than *occasional* sunshine.

It is disagreeable to have to watch the sun peeping out from behind clouds."

"Helen, Helen!" replied my mother, "weak, foolish girl! to like what no one can on earth obtain—perpetual sunshine in the moral world! And after all, when one considers what this life is, its *long pains* and its *short pleasures*, the *riches* of *one* day succeeded by the *poverty* of the *next*, the ties which are *firmly knit* only to be *severed* in *a moment*, and our *capacity* and *cause* for *enjoyment* never equal to our *capability* and *cause* of suffering; my child, what a *poor*, *thoughtless*, *frivolous* being must that be, whose *lip* can always *smile*, and whose *eye* can always *sparkle*, whom fears for *himself* can never *depress*, nor fears for *time* or for *eternity*, or anxiety for the welfare or the peace of others, can alarm into *self-government!*"

You know that when my mother

was roused into any mental emotion, she did not talk, she harangued, she spoke as if she read out of a book; it was, as you perceive, the case now.

"My dear mother," replied I, "such a being as you describe would be as odious to me as he could be to you; and his vivacity either of manner or countenance must be the result of want of feelings, affections, or intellect. To *such* perpetual sunshine I, like you, should object. But then the *clouds* must not be occasioned by the absence of good humour, or by the presence of sulkiness and ill humour, or by hypochondriacal tendencies."

"You do not suppose, Helen," she cried with quickness, "that De Walden is grave only because he is cross, and thoughtful only because he is hypochondriacal?"

"Were we talking of individuals, mamma?"

"If not, you know we were thinking of them, Helen; and I feel only too sensibly that the pique with which you answer when I praise Ferdinand, springs from your still powerful attachment to Seymour."

I could not deny it: but my conscience reproached me for having, from a feeling of jealousy on poor Seymour's account, not only seemed to insinuate an ill opinion of Ferdinand, which I did not entertain, but for having also given unnecessary pain to my mother. Oh, my dear friend! how often since I lost her have I reproached myself with these little offences! and what I suffered for the more painful trials which I inflicted on her no words can describe, no regret can atone. Sad state of human blindness, and human infirmity, when one seems conscious of the duties which one owes to a parent, only after one is utterly deprived of

the means to atone for the neglect of them!

By what I have said of my jealousy of my mother's admiration of Ferdinand, you will see how much I had forgiven Seymour's imputed ill conduct, and how little I adhered to my resolution of forgetting him. His letter and his new prize had much contributed to this. The latter was a proof that he had been leading a regular and studious life; and the former declared that my mother and myself were dearer to him than *any one else* in existence, and that our approbation was what he most coveted. Alas! when one loves, one easily believes what the beloved object asserts.

Still, however, spite of my constancy, De Walden by his varied talents, his rational pursuits, his instructive conversation, and his active benevolence, gained on my esteem every day. He was con-

stantly occupied himself, and his example stimulated us to equal industry. Weeks therefore fled as if they were days; and I felt raised in my own estimation by seeing myself the constant object of interest to such a man, and also by feeling myself able to appreciate him.

If Seymour had not been able to write elegant prose and gain prizes, my constancy would have been in great danger. But as it was, there was intellectuality on both sides; and I had only to weigh talent against strength of mind and extensive information, throwing a great many pleasing make-weights beside into the scale with the first.

My feelings towards Seymour were now called into fresh vigour by a letter from him, informing my mother that instead of having a monument made on purpose for his beloved parent, which would not have been ready for a considerable time,

he had purchased one which had been nearly finished for a gentleman who died before it was completed, and who had intended it for his wife, and which the sculptor had been desired by the heir at law not to trouble himself to complete.

This monument Pendarves said had met all his ideas of simple and classical beauty, and it would soon be ready for the inscription. This, he added, he had also inclosed for the approbation of my mother and "his cousin Helen," as he called me; considering the former as the representative of his mother, and *me* as the only woman after her whom he wished to consult on any of his plans.

We were excessively affected at the receipt of this letter; and De Walden, who was present, appeared distressed at the sight of our emotion.

"What do you think of the inscription, my dear?" asked my mother.

"Ask Mr. De Walden what he thinks of it," I replied.

It was as follows:—

Here lieth all that was mortal
of
The Lady Helen Pendarves.
Reader,
Pity only her survivors.

On the reverse side were to be the following words:—

This Monument
is erected to her memory,
as a token of love and gratitude,
by her only child,
whose proudest boast it will always be,
that he was the son of such a woman.

As I expected, he exclaimed in its praise; and as he was a great *theorizer*, he added much that delighted me, and much that consequently made my mother uncomfortable.

"It is," cried he, "simple and comprehensive. Oh! I must know him: simple

virtues, simple manners, and simple heart. Pompous writers not much real feeling—not *true*. I must know Pendarves; a good son makes a good friend, good every thing. When shall I see him?"

My mother looked grave, and I saw that the observant eye of De Walden remarked our contrary emotions with surprise, if not with uneasiness.

"Then, I may tell Pendarves that you like the inscription; may I, Helen?" said my mother.

"Oh yes, that it is every thing I could wish;" and she retired to write.

When she returned, it was evident that she had been weeping violently; and De Walden, without saying a word, took her hand and pressed it respectfully to his lips

This action, though it was at once feeling and affectionate, displeased me; for it seemed to my oblique manner of viewing such things an injury to Pendarves,

and in no very pleasant disposition of mind I left the room. Nor can I doubt but that my absence gave my mother an opportunity of telling De Walden all the circumstances of our situation with Seymour; for on my rejoining them I found my mother looking agitated, though also much pleased, and De Walden dejected, abstracted, and silent. Need I add that I had long since had the pain of discovering that he had conceived an attachment for me?

You may easily believe that this letter from Seymour, and my mother's assurance that he would certainly come to see the monument put up, did not tend to further the suit which I foresaw in process of time would be urged to me by De Walden. But the monument was sent down and erected, and yet Pendarves did not arrive. Consequently we thought he would not come at all: still, as precaution

is wisdom, my mother with much earnestness conjured me to pledge my solemn word to her, that if he came I would not converse with him alone, should he be ever so desirous of an interview, and that I would avoid him when he called at our house. This was a trial of my filial duty for which I was not prepared; but my mother was so bent on carrying her point, and she so solemnly expressed her conviction that his conduct when in London was not amended, that I gave at last the promise which she requested.

"Now then," said I to myself, "I hope poor Seymour will *not* come down."

Lady Helen's monument was placed next that of her husband, on which, by desire of Lord Seymour, an account of the two families, and of the manner of his death, had been engraved in an ostentatious manner. Consequently it had not been necessary for Seymour to give any addi-

tional details. My mother likewise had found herself at liberty, when she hung up a beautiful tablet to the memory of her husband, to confine herself to the simplicity which she loved; and these last furnished a curious contrast to the pompous copiousness of the first.

Still it was not to enjoy the superiority of my mother's and Seymour's taste, that I now so often visited the church, and resumed the custom which I had adopted in America, of strewing the graves I honoured with flowers. Oh no! it was because the *mother of Seymour Pendarves* and the *dearest friend of my youth* slept beneath that spotless marble; and I not only gratified my own feelings, but was sure my tribute would be gratifying to those of Pendarves.

Of *his* father I had *no* recollection, and of *my own* not sufficient to make such a

tribute, had I paid it to him, more than an act of coldly remembered duty: but my whole heart was interested when I performed it in honour of Lady Helen; and the chill and colourless marble looked warm and glowing, from the profusion of blooming flowers which I loved to scatter on it.

One morning, after offering as usual my tribute on this precious monument, and while kneeling beside it, a deep sigh startled me, and I beheld Seymour Pendarves, who had entered at another door, standing in pleased contemplation of me: but the view which I allowed myself of him was *short indeed:* my promise to my mother forcibly recurred to my mind, and the shriek of surprise and even of alarm which I uttered on beholding him so unexpectedly, was succeeded by my flying with the speed of phrensy to the

door behind me, before Seymour, thunderstruck and mortified and overcome by my seeming terror, on observing him, could recover himself sufficiently to prevent or overtake me.

Alas! by the beating of my heart, and the trembling of my whole frame, I knew too well that on hiding myself from him depended my only chance of keeping my promise. I therefore took refuge in a cottage, the owner of which was well known to me, instead of hastening home along the park, where he must with ease have overtaken me. Accordingly, I followed a sharp turning which led through a little lane to the cottage; and making my way through the first room into the back one, I threw myself on a bed, trembling and breathless.

"What is the matter, my dear young lady?" cried the cottager.

"Ask no questions, but shut the door," was my answer.

She obeyed me, and I listened for several minutes for the sound of rapid footsteps, but in vain. I felt mortified at finding that Seymour did not trouble himself to pursue me: still I dared not go home, lest I should meet him on my road. I was therefore obliged to tell the cottager that I had a particular reason for wishing to avoid seeing Mr. Pendarves, and I would thank her to watch, if she could do it unsuspected, for his quitting the church, and informing me which way he went.

"Yes, yes," replied the woman, shaking her head, "he shall not see you if I can help it; for though to be sure I hear he is very good to the poor, folks say he is but a wild one, and they do say—"

Here, with an agonizing heart, and a gesture of indignant impatience, I bade

her begone and do as I desired. When she had disappeared, I clasped my hands together convulsively. I sobbed aloud in the anguish of a wounded spirit; "And can it be," I cried, "that he whose sweet and pensive countenance so full of mournful tenderness I have just gazed upon for a moment, and shall never be able, I fear, to forget again; can he be a man whose notoriously profligate habits make him the theme of abuse to a person like this?" No: there is not one pang in the catalogue of human suffering, so acute as that which the heart feels from the consciousness of the decided depravity of a being tenderly beloved.

The woman on her return told me, "Mr. Pendarves was certainly seeking me; that he had, on leaving the church, looked round, and then ran several yards at full speed down the park; after which he stopped, and she thought it

probable that he would soon be past the front window, but she would look out and see. She did so, and having told me in a whisper, adding that "through a hole in the little muslin curtain I could see him without being seen," I was weak enough to take advantage of the opportunity. He walked dejectedly and with folded arms; the glow on his cheek, which the sight of me had deepened, was now succeeded by a deadly paleness; and I felt a bitterness which not even my sense of his errors could assuage, that he was wretched, and that I had made him so. My spy watched him into his own house, and only then I ventured to return to mine. I must say that I look back on this morning, spite of the sufferings which I endured, with much self-satisfaction, as I had completely acted up to the dictates of filial duty under the strongest temptation of disobeying them, as my

mother was gone with De Walden to spend the day from home; and had I not conscientiously avoided Seymour, I might even without any positive infringement of duty, have exposed myself to the risk of seeing him undisturbed by her presence. Happily, however, my principles were too firm to allow me to be satisfied with this subterfuge, and, as I before said, I recall this day with satisfaction.

Every hour I expected that Seymour would call, but he did not come: however, I saw his servant ride up to the gate, deliver a note, and wait for an answer. I gave it verbally to my own maid. It was, that Mrs. Pendarves was gone out for the whole day. Shall I confess that I *hoped* Seymour would, on hearing this, make an attempt to see me, though I was resolved to refuse him admittance; and I was *mortified* that he did not? Just before I expected my mother and De Walden would

return, I saw Seymour's servant come to the door again, and deliver another note, as it seemed; but when it was brought into the room, I found it was a letter to me! I was at once relieved, agitated, miserable, and delighted; yet my hand trembled so much I thought I should never be able to open the letter. The following were its contents:—

"When this letter reaches you, Miss Pendarves, I shall be at a distance from that scene which to me can now never again be a home, but which is endeared to me by such tender recollections, that not even by the miserable ones which now must succeed to them can they be ever effaced.

"Oh, my beloved mother! could you have believed that your son could be refused admittance within the doors of your dearest friend, and forbidden even to speak to the play-fellow and companion of

his childhood, and the once appointed sharer of his heart and his fortunes? Could you have thought that the friend who adored you would have gone from home purposely to avoid him, and to avoid his just reproaches; because, without any *new* offence on his part, she had not only resolved never to allow him to address her daughter, but had pledged that daughter's hand, as he is informed, to another? And yet her parting words were 'Your marriage with Helen depends wholly on yourself!' These words I never have forgotten; they regulated my conduct, they gave strength to my resolutions; I came hither full of hope, and I go hence overwhelmed with despair. For my claims, claims which I have *never resigned*, have been disregarded, and Helen will be the wife of a stranger, the acquaintance of yesterday!

"Nay more, at sight of me, Helen

herself, the conscious Helen, fled as from a pestilence! And at what a moment too, when I had surprised her in an office the most flattering to your memory, and the most precious to my heart!

Cruel Helen! what have you done? and what have *I* done to be so treated? Surely it was from your mother herself that I should first have heard of your intended marriage. But no: I refused to believe it till your flight and your countenance of terror on seeing me confirmed the horrible truth.

"But though you might not be able to tell it me yourself, why did Mrs. Pendarves avoid me? Why, when I wrote to tell her I was coming for a single day, did she not make a point of seeing me either at her own house or at mine? But I will not detain you much longer from your attention to the happy stranger.

"Oh, Helen! had you continued to

encourage my hopes, I might have been a happiness to myself and an ornament to society. But now—yes, now, it will be well if I am not a disgrace to it. But why do I continue to write? Shall I tell you, Helen? It is because I feel that I am addressing you for the *last time;* for the wife of the Count De Walden must not, I know, receive letters from

"SEYMOUR PENDARVES."

Though I now think, and you will probably think so too, that this letter was written full as much from the head as from the heart, you will not wonder that it bent me to the earth in agony; and that when my mother entered the hall on her return, she heard my voice uttering the tones of loud lamentation, and found me in the arms of the terrified servants. Never have I since suffered myself to be so weakly overpowered. I try to excuse such

weakness by the state of my health at the time. Indisposition, and a tendency to a severe feverish cold, had prevented me from accompanying my mother and De Walden. Nor did the sudden surprise of seeing Pendarves steady my nerves, or decrease my fever; but these circumstances prepared the way for the letter to affect me as it did, and to excuse in some measure the state in which my mother beheld me.

An open letter near me in the handwriting of Pendarves accounted for all that she saw. I was become more composed, though I did not speak, and she then eagerly read it; but she soon desisted, to express her surprise at the charge of having gone out purposely to avoid him; for no such letter had ever reached her: in consequence of some accident it did not arrive till the next day. She declared she could not sleep till she

had written to Seymour to exonerate herself from so heavy a charge. I wished to say, "and to assure him, I hope, that I am not engaged to De Walden, that, on the contrary, he is not even a declared lover:" but I *dared* not say this; and my mother read on—but she read hastily, and wished, I saw, to conceal from me the painful emotions which the letter occasioned her. She therefore insisted on my forgetting these ill-founded reproaches, as she called them; she then left me to write to Seymour.

The next morning Seymour's servant came to say, he was going to rejoin his master, and wished to know if we had any commands for him. To him, therefore, was consigned the exculpatory letter. But of this I had no knowledge at the time; for when my mother and the servant entered the room next day, they found me in all the restlessness of fast-

increasing illness, and my mother, before night, was assured by the medical attendants, that I was suffering under a very formidable attack of the scarlet fever.

For three days and nights my life was despaired of; and as, according to the merciful dispensations of Providence, "good always springs from evil," my mother learnt to know, from the danger of her only child, that life was not so valueless to her, as she was sometimes disposed to think it. But hope succeeding to fear, on the fourth morning from my seizure I was pronounced out of danger. Yet a cloud, and that a dark one, still hung over my mother's prospects; for I had named Seymour, in my delirium, in such terms as convinced her that he was ever uppermost in my mind, and that my illness had been the consequence of misery endured on his account.

De Walden, during this time, was in a state of painful anxiety. Scarcely could he be prevailed upon to keep out of the infected chamber; his nights were never once passed in bed, till I was declared to be in safety; and on my recovery, I had to experience the mortifying necessity of owing gratitude where I believed that I could never make an adequate return of affection.

Well, I recovered, though I remained for many weeks thin, languid, and afflicted with the disagreeable local complaints which often attend on the subsiding of a fever like mine, particularly inflammations of the eyelid, and I could not bear for some time to have my eyes uncovered. During this period of suffering, De Walden devoted his whole time to amusing me. He read to me while I reclined upon the sofa, and I for-

got my complaints while listening to his intelligent comments on what he read. It was therefore with considerable concern that I saw him depart for Cambridge, in October; but my concern was joy to his. Never did I see any one more agitated on such an occasion, and scarcely could the presence of my mother restrain the declaration of love which hovered on his lips, and which I dreaded to hear: but he did restrain it; for he had promised her that he would do so, on her assurance that the time was not come for its being favourably received.

At Christmas he returned to us, and the surprise which he showed at sight of me convinced us of the great change which had taken place in my appearance, in consequence, as is sometimes the case at my age (for I was not yet seventeen), of a severe fever. I was become taller by

several inches; that is, I had become from five feet five, full five feet eight, and from my upright carriage, as I have heard you remark, I look considerably taller. But I am quite sure, that had the attachment of De Walden been founded on my personal appearance, it would, during his stay with us, have completely vanished; for my eyes were inflamed, my *embonpoint* had not increased, and my colour was not only gone, but my complexion looked thick as well as pale. I perceived however no diminution in the ardent devotion which his manner expressed, and I sighed while I thought, that had Seymour Pendarves seen me, he perhaps would not have remained so constant.

What an argument was this belief for me to try to conquer my attachment! But certain it is, that the example of

Lady Helen and my mother influenced me even unconsciously to myself, and that I considered eternal constancy as praiseworthy, and not blameable. Love had led my mother and my admirable friend and monitress to leave their parents and country, and they had wept the loss of husbands thus exclusively beloved, in sacred singleness of attachment. It was in vain therefore that my mother told me love was to be conquered, and that she insinuated it was even indelicate to pine after an object who was perhaps unworthy, and certainly negligent, if not faithless. Her example, as I before said, had raised the passion in my estimation; the object of my love was one on whom my eyes had first opened, one who was associated with my earliest and happiest recollections, one too, who, she must remember, had at an early age saved my

life at the hazard of his own (a story I shall tell by and by); and I could not but think she wished me to forget Seymour, chiefly because she preferred Ferdinand. I believe I have forgotten to mention, that Seymour Pendarves went abroad as soon as he left our village, and that he did not receive my mother's explanatory letter till several months after it was written.

In January De Walden returned to college, and I was still so unwell, that my mother wished me to change the air; and as business required her to undertake a journey, we set off in February on a tour.

I have never, I believe, during my whole narrative, mentioned some of my relations more than once, and this has been from a wish of not encumbering it with unnecessary characters. The uncle with whom my mother had lived previously to

her marriage, who occasionally spent months at our house, and whom we visited in return, died suddenly at a very advanced age, during my illness. It was this event which called my mother, as one of the executors as well as residuary legatee, from her home.

The weather was cold, dry, February weather, and the brightness of the road from the effect of frost and sun was so painful to my eyes, that my mother resolved to travel all night, and repose in the day, after our second stage from London; and we set off for Oxford at one in the morning. From the ruggedness of the road, however, and the care which our coachman always took of our horses, we had full leisure to dwell on the possibility of our being robbed; when at about three in the morning two horsemen rode past the carriage, and one of them looked

into the window next my mother which she had just let down: but he rode on, and we were grasping each other's hand in terrified silence, when he came back again, and desired the postillion to stop. Our footman, who was on the box, was disposed to resist this command; when a faint voice, the voice of the other gentleman, who now rode slowly up, conjured them to stop for mercy's sake, for they were not highwaymen: the first now came up to the window, and begged to be heard.

He and his friend, he said, were Oxford students, who had been to London without leave; and if they were missing another morning at chapel, they were liable to a punishment which they wished to avoid: but they should certainly have reached Oxford in excellent time, had not his companion been taken ex-

tremely ill; and unless we would take him in, he must stop at the next house, at whatever risk.

You may suppose that my mother did not hesitate; she instantly desired the footman to assist the gentleman into the coach, and mount his horse, a plan which was thankfully acceded to. His companion instantly galloped off at full speed for Oxford.

The invalid, unable to speak, sunk back exhausted in one corner, and seemed most thankful, though he spoke almost inaudibly, for the use of my mother's smelling-bottle.

The weather had now experienced such a change, that the frost was gone, though the night was so dark that the stranger could not distinguish our faces, or we his. Indeed he appeared to be insensible of external objects, and heedless of sounds;

for he did not always answer my mother's kind inquiries.

I, meanwhile, was as silent as the invalid, and sat back in the coach, to indulge in the feelings which agitated me at the idea, that before long I should be in the very place which probably contained Pendarves, but without the remotest chance of seeing him. At length, we heard a village clock strike four, and day began to dawn; my mother let down the glass, to feel for awhile the refreshing breeze of morning. As she did this, desiring me to keep my thick veil wrapped close round my face for fear of cold, the invalid said he would put his head out of the window, for he thought that the air would revive him. My mother drew back to make room for him; when, as the rays of the red and yellow dawn fell on his wan face, she recognised in this

object of her kindness Seymour Pendarves himself!

He too, as her veil was thrown back, knew her at the same moment, and faintly ejaculating,

"Is it possible!" he turned his eyes eagerly toward me, then seized both her hands, and resting them on her knees, buried his face in them and burst into tears—while with the hand next me he grasped mine, which was involuntarily extended towards him.

A painful silence ensued, the result of most uncomfortable feelings, which on the side of Pendarves were accompanied by the most distressing consciousness; for we had as it were detected him in a breach of college-rules; and but for us, his irregularity of conduct might, perhaps, have exposed him to the disgrace of expulsion. So much for that amend-

ment on which *alone* depended his union with me. That was an event however, which, though we knew it not, he had ceased to think probable; for the report of my engagement to De Walden was still current wherever we were known; and if he had not known that Mr. Pendarves, the head of the family, knew nothing of this intended marriage, Seymour would have been convinced it was a fact *himself*.

My mother's tears now fell silently down her cheek, and in spite of herself she pressed her forehead on the head of Seymour, as it still rested on her knees. Certain it is, that she loved him with much of a mother's tenderness; loved him also because he resembled his father and mine; and loved him still more because he was all that remained to her of her ever regretted friend. The opposition to our union, therefore, was the strongest proof possible of the strength of her prin-

ciples, and of her affection for me; for though she thus loved, she rejected him, because she was sure that he was not likely to make her daughter happy.

My mother was the first to break silence. In a voice of great feeling she said, "Seymour, unhappy young man! Why do I see you *here* infringing college-rules? and why do I see you thus? Have you been ill long? Have you had no advice?" It was now quite day; and as he raised his head, the wild wanness of his look was terrible to us both, and it was with difficulty that I could prevent myself from sobbing audibly, while I anxiously expected his answer.

"Spare me, spare me," cried he mournfully, "a painful confession of follies."

"Did not business carry you to London, Seymour?"

"No—nor kept me there. It was the search of pleasure; and I have scarcely

been in bed for three nights. Yet no; let me do myself some little justice: I was unhappy, and I *am* unhappy. By denying me all hope of Helen, you made me desperate, and I fled to riotous living, to get away from myself: therefore do not reproach me; I am quite punished enough by seeing before me the intended wife of Count De Walden: curses on the name! Tell me," cried he wildly, seeing that my mother hesitated to speak, "am I not right? Is not my Helen, as I once thought her, betrothed to De Walden?"

"Oh, no! no!" cried I eagerly, and I caught my mother's eye rather sternly fixed upon me; but I regarded it not, for I felt at the very bottom of my heart the sudden change from misery to joy, which Seymour's face now exhibited. He could not speak, his heart was too full; but leaning back, overcome both with physical and moral exhaustion, he

nearly fainted away: he was soon however roused to new energy by the indignation with which he listened to what my mother felt herself called upon to say. I shall not enter into a detail of her observations: suffice that she candidly told him her objections to his being allowed to address me remained in full force, as did her ardent wish that I should marry De Walden, who had offered himself as my lover, and who (she was certain) would as surely make me happy in marriage, as he would make me *miserable*.

When she had ended, he thanked her for her candour, but coldly reminded her that he had always said he would never take a refusal from any lips but mine, and he retained his resolution.

"And now," said he, "the opportunity is arrived. Helen, such as I am, not worthy of you, I own, except as far as tender and constant love can make me

so, I offer myself to your acceptance. Speak, Yes, or No, and speak as your heart dictates."

I remained silent for a minute, then faltered out, sighing deeply as I spoke, "I have no will, can have no will, but my mother's."

"Enough," replied he, in a tone and with a look which seemed to me to be the climax of despair. "Hark!" cried he, "the Oxford clocks are striking six: why do I linger here? for here I am sure I have now no longer any business."

He let down the glass, and desired the postillions to stop, while the footman rode up to the door. This little exertion seemed too much for him, and he sunk back quite exhausted, while my mother tried to take one of his hands.

"Psha!" cried he, throwing her hand from him, "Give me love, or give me hate. No half-measures for me; nor hope, when you and your daughter have

given me my death blow, that I will accept of *emollients*. I thank *you*, madam, as I would a *stranger*, for your *courtesy* in admitting me here, and I wish you both good morning."

Again his strength failed, and he was forced to wipe the dews of weakness from his forehead.

"Go I must, even if I die in the effort!" he then exclaimed.

I could not bear this, and while my mother herself greatly affected held me back, I tried to catch him by the arm; and in a voice which evinced the deep feeling of my soul, I exclaimed, "Stay, dear Seymour! you are not fit to go, you are not, indeed!" But I spoke in vain: he mounted his horse assisted by the servant, while I broke from my mother, and stretched out my clasped hands to him in fruitless supplication: then giving me a look of such mixed expression that I could not exactly say whether it most pained or gratified

me, he was out of sight in a moment; while I looked after him till I could see him no longer; and even then, I still looked in hopes of seeing him again. I did see him again, just as we had entered Oxford, and were passing Magdalen: he *stood at the gate;* he had therefore *seen* my long earnest gaze as if in search of him; and though I felt confused, I also felt comforted by it. In another moment we were near him, and his eyes met mine with an expression mournful, tender, and I thought grateful too, for the interest which I took in him: he kissed his hand to me, and then disappeared within the gates.

"Helen," said my mother, "I meant to have stopped here, to refresh the horses and ourselves: but after what I have seen this morning I shall proceed immediately.'

She left her footman however behind, to bring us word the next day how Mr. Pendarves was. Oh! how I loved her for

this kind attention! But then she was a rare instance of the union of strong feelings with unbending principle.

Methinks I hear you say, "I hope you were now convinced that Seymour's attachment, as well as Ferdinand's, was founded on too good a basis to be shaken by your altered looks?"

No, indeed, I was not—for so conscious was I that my looks were altered, I *never once* lifted up my veil before Pendarves. I dare say both he and my mother imputed this to the wish of hiding my emotion, whereas it was in fact only to hide my inflamed eyes, and my *ugliness*. But what a degrading confession for a heroine to make; to plead guilty of having bad eyes, and, a plain face! It is as bad as Amelia's broken nose—but *n'importe;* my eyes, like her nose, will get well again; and like her, I shall come out a complete beauty, when no one could expect it.

We awaited with great impatience the return of the servant, from whom we learnt that Mr. Pendarves had been seized with an alarming fit on leaving the chapel, and was pronounced to be in an inflammatory fever.

"Oh, my dear mother," cried I wildly, "he has no one to nurse him now that loves him!"

"But he *shall* have," she replied; and in another hour we were on our road to Oxford. My mother insisted on being admitted to the bed-side of the unconscious sufferer, who in his delirium was ever blaming the cruelty of *her* who was now watching and weeping beside his pillow. Long was his illness, and severe his suffering: but he struggled through; and the first object whom he beheld on recovering his recollection, was my mother leaning over him with the anxiety of a real parent. Never could poor Seymour recall this mo-

ment of his life without tears of grateful tenderness.

He was too much disappointed, however, to find that her resolution not to allow him to address me remained in full force; for the circumstances on which it was founded were added to, rather than diminished. Nor could his assertion, that his dissipation was owing to the despair into which she had plunged him, at all excuse him in her eyes, for she could not admit that any sorrow could be an excuse for error.

This indeed, far from its being a motive to move her heart in his favour, closed it the more against him; as it proved she thought that from his weakness of character he never could deserve to be intrusted with the happiness of her child.

Bitter, therefore, was his mortification, when, on expressing the hopes to which her kindness had given birth, she

assured him that her sentiments remained unaltered.

"Then, madam," cried he, "why were you so cruel as to save my life?"

"Young man," she gravely replied, "was it not my duty to try to save your life, that you might try to amend it? Were you prepared to meet that terrible tribunal from which even the most perfect shrink back appalled?"

On his complete recovery my mother and I proceeded to the house of my uncle, now become our property; and thence we returned home. The following vacation Seymour finally left college, and again went abroad.

He wrote a farewel letter to my mother, as eloquent as gratitude and even filial affection could make it: she wept over it, and exclaimed,

"Oh, that the generous-hearted creature who wrote this should not be all I

wish him! He is like a beautiful but unsupported edifice, fair to behold, but dangerous to lean against!"

There was one part of the letter, however, which my mother did not understand: I fancied that I did, though I did not own it. He assured her, that in spite of every thing he carried more hope away in his heart than he had ever yet known: hope, and even a *precious conviction* which he *had never known before*, and which he was sure his cousin Helen would wish him to possess, as it would be to him the *strongest shield* against *temptation*.

"My dear," said my mother, after long consideration, "how stupid I have been not to understand this sooner! He certainly means that he is become very religious; and that this hope, this sweet conviction, are faith and another world. Dear Seymour, I am so glad! for though I do not choose

you should marry a Methodist, and one extreme is to me as unpleasant as another, still I believe Methodist to be a very happy people; and I hope Seymour, for his own sake, will not change again."

I smiled, but said nothing; for I put a very different interpretation on his words. As it appeared to me, his *hope* and *conviction* were that he possessed *my love*, and that my compliance with my mother's will was wholly against my own; for I recollected the tone in which I had replied to his question concerning my engagement to De Walden, "Oh, no! no!" and also my scream of agony in spite of his alarming weakness when he persevered in leaving us, and the anxiety with which I looked at him at the gates of Magdalen. Yes, when we exchanged that look, I felt that our hearts understood each other, and I was sure that the shield to which Seymour alluded was his conviction of my love.

But alas! he was absent—De Walden was present. He came to us at the beginning of the long vacation, and was to remain with us till he returned to college.

My mother now urged me to admit the addresses of De Walden, showing me at the same time a letter from his uncle, in which he expressed his earnest desire that his nephew should be a successful suitor, and offering to make a splendid addition to his fortune whenever he should become my husband. In short, could the prospect of rank and fortune, could manly beauty, superior sense, unspotted virtues, and uncommon acquirements, have made me unfaithful to my first attachment, unfaithful I should soon have become; but though the attentions of De Walden could not annihilate, they certainly weakened it. No wonder that they should do so, when I was so little sure of the stability of Seymour's affection, that I was fearful it would be weakened by any change in my external appear-

ance; and asI had often heard him say, he did not admire tall women, I own I was weak enough to be uneasy at the growth consequent upon my fever; and I was glad, when we met in the coach, not only that my veil concealed my altered looks, but that, as I was seated, he could not discover my almost may-pole height.

De Walden, on the contrary, admired tall women; and declared that I had now reached the exact height which gave majesty to the female figure without diminishing its grace; and as I really thought myself too tall, his praise (for flattery it was not) was particularly welcome to me. Whatever was the cause, whether I liked De Walden so well, that I liked Seymour so much less as to cease to be fretted by his absence, I cannot tell; but certain it is that I recovered my bloom, and that from the increase of my *embonpoint*, my mother feared I should become too fat for

a girl of seventeen: my spirits too recovered all their former gaiety, so that October, the time for the departure of De Walden, arrived before I was conscious that he had been with us half his accustomed time.

My mother now naturally enough augured well for the success of his suit; and I owned that I was no longer averse to listen to his love, but that I would on no account engage myself to him till I was *quite sure* I had conquered my attachment to Pendarves.

This was certainly conceding a great deal, and De Walden left us full of hope for the first time: while I, who felt much of my affection for him vanish when I no longer listened to the deep persuasive tones of his voice, should have repented having gone so far, had I not seen happiness beaming in my beloved mother's face.

At Christmas De Walden came to us again, and I then found that in such cases it is impossible (to use an expressive phrase) "*to say A without saying B*;" I had gone so far that I was expected to go further; and but for the secret misgivings of my own heart, and the firm dictates of my own judgement, De Walden would have returned to college in January my betrothed husband. But, though we had not received any tidings from Pendarves, and my mother felt assured of his inconstancy, I persevered firmly in my resolution not to *engage* myself till I *had seen him again*, and could be assured, by seeing him with indifference, that my heart had really changed its master.

You will wonder, perhaps, how a man of Ferdinand's delicacy could wish to accept a heart which had been so long wedded to another, and that other a living

object. But my mother had convinced herself, and had no difficulty in convincing him, that I was deceived in the strength of my former attachment; that she had originally, though unconsciously, directed my thoughts to him; that, like a romantic girl, I had thought it pretty to be in love, and that my fancied passion had been irritated by obstacles; but that, when once *his* wife, I should find that *he alone* had ever been the real possessor of my affections.

It is curious to observe how easily even the most sensible persons can forget, and believe, according to their wishes. My mother had absolutely forgotten the proofs of my strong attachment to Seymour, which she had once so much deplored. She forgot my illness, which if not caused was increased by his letter of reproach; she forgot the tell-tale misery which I had exhibited on the road to Oxford; and she

did not read in the firmness with which I still persisted to see Seymour again, a secret suspicion of still lingering love.

But the crisis of our fates was fast approaching: I received an invitation to spend the months of May and June in London, with a friend who had once resided near us, and who had gone to reside in the metropolis.

I felt a great desire to accept this invitation; and my mother kindly permitted me to go, but declined going herself, saying that it was time *I* should learn to live without *her*, and *she* without *me*. Accordingly, for the first time we were separated. But this separation was soon soothed to me by the charms of the life which I was leading. I was a new face: I was only seventeen, and I was *said* to be the heiress of considerable property. This, you know, was an exaggeration; my fortune was handsome, but not very

large: however, I was followed and courted, but none of my admirers were in my opinion at all equal to Seymour or De Walden: they gratified my vanity, but they failed to touch my heart.

One day at an exhibition, I met a newly married lady, who when single had been staying in the neighbourhood of my mother's uncle during our last visit, and was much admired both by my mother and myself. This meeting gave us great pleasure, and she hoped I would come and see her at her lodging. I promised that I would.

"But, there is nothing like the time present: will you go home with me now, and spend a quiet day? You must come again when my husband is at home and I have a party; but he dines out to-day, and I shall be alone till evening."

"But I am not dressed."

"Oh! I can send for your things and

your maid; and such an opportunity as this of telling you all about my love and my marriage may never occur again."

I was as eager to hear as she could be to tell; my friend consented to part with me, and I accompanied her home.

In the afternoon while we were expecting two or three ladies of her acquaintance, and were preparing to walk with them in the park, my friend received a little note from her husband.

"That is so like Ridley," said she. "However, this is an improvement; for he often goes out and invites half a dozen people to dinner without giving me any notice: but now he has only invited one man to supper, and has sent to let me know they are coming. His name I see is the same as yours, Seymour Pendarves: is he a cousin of yours?"

"What!" cried I, almost gasping for

breath, "Seymour Pendarves in England, and coming hither!"

"Yes; but what is the matter, or why are you so agitated?"

"If you please I will go home, I had rather go home."

Mrs. Ridley looked at me with wonder and concern, but she was too delicate to ask me for the confidence which she saw I was not disposed to give. She therefore mildly replied, that if I must leave her, she would order her servant to attend me.

A few moments had restored my self-possession; and I thought that as the time was now arrived when I could, by seeing Pendarves, enable myself to judge of the real state of my heart, I should be wrong to run away from the opportunity.

"But pray, tell me," said I, "when you expect Mr. Ridley and his friends?"

"Oh not till it is dark, not till near supper time."

Immediately (I am ashamed of my girlish folly) I had a strong desire to discover whether Seymour would recognise my person, altered as it was in height and in size; and I also wished to get over the first flutter of seeing him without its being perceived by him. In consequence I told Mrs. Ridley, that Seymour was my cousin, but that he had not seen me *standing* since I was grown so very tall; and I had a great wish to ascertain whether he would know me. "Therefore," said I, "do not order candles till we have sat a little while."

Mrs. Ridley smiled, fully persuaded that, though I might speak the truth, I did not speak *all* the truth. I was at liberty in the mean time, during our walk in the park, to indulge in reverie, and to try to strengthen my agitated nerves

against the approaching interview. But concerning what was I now anxious?—Not so much to ascertain whether I loved *him*, but whether he loved *me*. Alas! this anxiety was a certain proof that he was still the possessor of my heart, and that of course I ought not to be and could not be the wife of De Walden.

Just as we stopped at the door, on our return from our walk, Mr. Ridley was knocking at it, accompanied by Seymour. I felt myself excessively agitated, while I pulled my hat and veil over my face: to avoid a shower, we had crowded into a hackney-coach. Luckily I had not to get out first; but judge how I trembled when I found Seymour's hand presented to assist me. My foot slipped, and if he had not caught me in his arms, I should have fallen. Mrs. Ridley, however, good-naturedly observed, that she had been nearly falling herself, the step was so bad,

and her friend *Miss Pen* was also very short-sighted. I now walked up stairs, tottering as I went.

"Fanny," whispered Mr. Ridley to his wife, "who is she?" She told him I was a Miss Pen, and she would tell him more by and by.

"Pray, Fanny, when do you mean to have candles?" said Mr. Ridley.

"Not yet; not till we go to take off our bonnets. I like this light, it is so pleasant to the eyes."

"Yes, and so cheap too," replied her husband. "But I wonder you should like this sort of light, Fanny, for you are far removed yet from that period of life when *le petit jour* is so favourable to beauty: you are still young enough to bear the searching light of broad-eyed day, and so I trust are all the ladies present; though I must own a *veil* is always a sus-

picious circumstance," he added, coming up to me.

"Yes, yes," said his wife, "I always suspect a veil is worn to conceal something."

"But it may be worn in mercy," he added; "and perhaps it is so here, if I may judge of what is hidden by what is shown: if I may form an opinion indeed from that hand and arm, on which youth and beauty are so legibly written, I—"

Here, confused and almost provoked, I drew on my gloves; and Mrs. Ridley, who loved fun, whispered her husband,

"Do not go on; she is quite ugly, scarred with the confluent small-pox, blear-eyed, and hideous: you will be surprised when you see her face."

She then begged to speak to me; and as I walked across the room in which we

sat to join her in the next, I saw Ridley whisper Pendarves.

"May be so," he replied: "but her figure and form are almost the finest I ever saw."

"And yet I am so very tall," said I to myself, with a joy that vibrated through my frame.

The conversation now became general; and on a lady's being mentioned who had married a second husband before the first had been dead quite a year, Pendarves, to my consternation, began a violent philippic against women, declaring that scarcely one of us was capable of a persevering attachment; that the best and dearest of husbands might be forgotten in six months; and that those men only could expect to be happy who laid their plans for happiness independently of woman's love.

It is strange, but true, that the indig-

nation which this speech excited in me enabled me to conquer at once the agitation which had hitherto kept me silent. Coming hastily forward, I exclaimed, while he rose respectfully,

"Is it for you, Mr. Seymour Pendarves, to hold such language as this? Have you forgotten Lady Helen, your own blessed mother, and her friend and yours?"

So saying, while he stood confounded, self-judged, and full of wonder,—for the voice and manner were mine, but the height and figure were no longer so,—I left the room; and a violent burst of tears relieved my oppressed heart.

Mrs. Ridley then rung for a candle, and considerately left me to myself.

Oh! the flutter of that moment when I re-entered the drawing-room, which I found brilliantly lighted up! Seymour, who had I found now doubted, and now

believed, the evidence of his ears in opposition to that of his sight, was standing at the window; but he turned hastily round at my entrance, and our eyes instantly met.

"Helen!" exclaimed he, springing forward to meet me, while my hand was extended toward him; and I believe my countenance was equally encouraging. That yielded hand was pressed by turns to his lips and his heart; but still we neither of us spoke, and Seymour suddenly disappeared.

Mr. Ridley, who was that *melancholy* thing to other people a *professed joker*, to my great relief (as it enabled me to recover myself) now came up to me bowing respectfully, and begged me to veil my face again; for he saw that my excessive ugliness had been too much for his poor friend, and he hoped for his sake, as well

as that of the rest of mankind, I would conceal myself from sight.

I told him, when his friend came back I would consider of his proposition, and if he approved it I would veil directly.

Before Seymour returned, I asked Mr. Ridley whether he suspected who his presuming monitor was?

"Pray, madam," he archly replied, "say that word again. What are you to Mr. Pendarves?"

"I said 'Monitor.'"

"Oh, *monitor!* I thought you were *something* to him, but did not exactly *know what:* no wonder he was so alarmed at sight of you, for monitors I believe have a right to chastise their pupils; and I begin now to fear he will not come back. Do you use the ferrule or the rod, Miss Pendarves?"

"You have not yet answered my question, sir."

"Oh! I forgot. 'Heavens!' cried he as you closed the door, 'is it possible? Could that be my cousin Helen Pendarves? Yes, it could be no other, and yet—' Is that like him, madam?"

"Oh, very."

"'Well,' I, in the simplicity of my heart, replied 'your cousin she may be; but my wife told me her name was Pen.'

"'Oh, yes! it must be Helen; it was her own sweet voice and manner.'

"'She is given to scolding then; is she?' said I.

"'Oh!' said he, 'she is'—But I will spare your blushes, madam; though I must own that I could not believe you *were* the lady in question, because my wife told me you were hideous to behold, and *he* said you were a beauty: be-

sides, when he last saw you, he added, you were thin and short; but then he sagely observed, that a year and a half made a great difference sometimes, and you had not met during that period. But here comes the gentleman to answer your questions himself. What I further said did not at all please him."

"No! what was it, sir?"

"That if you were indeed Miss Helen Pendarves, you were a great nuisance; for that you had won and broken at least a dozen hearts; but that it was a comfort to know you would soon be removed from the power of doing further mischief, as you were going to be married to a Swiss gentleman, and would soon leave the kingdom."

"And you told him this?" cried I, turning very faint.

"Yes, I did, and he had just turned

away from me when you made your appearance."

Seymour now entered the room, and I was from this conversation at no loss to account for the gloom which overspread his countenance while he hoped Mrs. Pendarves was well.

"My dear Fanny," said Mr. Ridley, who must have his joke, "I hope you will make proper apologies to this gentleman and me, for having exposed us to such a horrible surprise as the sight of that lady's face has given us. Pray was this ungenerous plan of concealment Miss Pendarves's or yours?"

"Hers, entirely."

"But what was her motive?"

"She wished to see whether her cousin would know her through her veil."

"Oh! she was acting Clara in the

Duenna; you know she plays Don Ferdinand some such trick."

"True: but Ferdinand and Clara were *lovers*, not cousins."

"Cannot cousins be lovers, Fanny?"

Here the entrance of the servants with supper interrupted the conversation; and Seymour and I sat down to it with what appetite we could.

"It is astonishing," said Mr. Ridley, "what use and habit can effect: I have already conquered my horror at sight of your friend's face, and I see Mr. Pendarves has not only done the same, but I suspect he is meditating a drawing of it, to send to the Royal Society, as a *lusus naturæ*."

In spite of himself, Seymour smiled at this speech, and replied, while I looked very foolish, that he was gazing at me with wonder; as he could not conceive how I

had gained so many inches in height since he saw me.

"I grew several inches after my fever," I replied.

"Fever! When? where? what fever, Helen? I never heard you were ill."

"Oh, yes, I was,—and my life was despaired of."

"You in danger, Helen! and I never knew it?"

"It was really very unkind," said Ridley, "to keep such a delightful piece of intelligence from you."

"But *when* was it, dear Helen?"

"When I saw you on the road to Oxford, I was only just recovered."

"Only just recovered! You did not look ill; but I remember you had your veil down, so I really did not see your face."

"So, so, wearing her veil down is a common thing with her, is it? I am glad she is so considerate."

These jokes, however, had their use; for they tended to keep under the indulgence of feelings, which required to be restrained in both of us in the presence of others.

"But, when were you first seized, Helen? and what brought on your fever?" said Seymour, as if urged by some secret consciousness.

You will not wonder that I blushed, and even stammered, as I answered, "I was not quite well when I saw you in the church—and—and—"

"And what?"

"I was seized that night: and when my mother returned, she found me very ill indeed."

"That night!" Here he started from his seat.

"Ah, Fanny!" cried Mr. Ridley, "you *would* buy them! I always objected to them."

"Buy what, my dear Ridley?"

"These chairs: I always said they were such uneasy ones, no one could sit on them long: you see Mr. Pendarves can't endure them."

I was very glad when Seymour sat down again. When he did, he leaned his elbows on the table, and gazed in my face as if he would have read the very bottom of my soul: but hope seemed to have supplanted despair. Mr. Ridley now suddenly rose, and holding his hand to his side, cried, "Oh!" in such a comic yet pathetic manner, that though his wife really believed he was in pain, she could not help laughing: then seizing a candle, he went *ohing* and limping out of the room, leaning on her arm, and declaring he believed he must go to bed, if we would excuse him.

There was no mistaking his motive, and Seymour was not slow to profit by

the opportunity thus good-naturedly offered him.

"Helen!" he exclaimed, seating himself by me, and seizing my hand, "is what I heard true? Am I the most wretched of men? Is this hand promised to De Walden?"

"No—not yet promised."

"Then you mean to give it to him?"

"Certainly not *now*."

"Why that emphasis on *now?*"

"Because I am sure that I do not love him sufficiently."

"And since when have you found this out?"

I did not answer; but my tell-tale silence emboldened him to put his own interpretation on what I had said; and now for the first time, unrestrained by any unwelcome witness, he passionately pleaded the interests of his own love, and drew from me an open confession of mine.

Nor was there long a secret of my heart which was withheld from him; and while he rejoiced over the certainty that his rival's hopes were destroyed by this interview, I rejoiced in hearing that the conviction he had received of my affection for him had preserved him from temptations to which he would probably otherwise have yielded.

"But they are returning," cried he: "tell me where you are, and promise to see me to-morrow, my own precious Helen! Never, never, was I so happy before."

"Nor I," I could have added; but I believe my eyes spoke for me, and I promised to see him the next day at eleven. He had just time to resume his chair, when Mr. and Mrs. Ridley returned.

"I have been very unwell," said Ridley, "and am so still; but I would come back, as she would not leave me, because

I was sure, what with the uneasy chairs, and Miss Pen's ugly face, you would be so fretted, Mr. Pendarves, that you would never come hither again."

"'But then, my dear,' said Fanny, 'you forget they are relations, and must love each other.'

"'That I deny,' said I, 'if they are not both loveable.'"

"'And then,' says she, 'they have not met for so long a time, and have so much to say!'

"'I don't believe that,' says I: 'if so, they would have taken care to meet sooner;' but pray, what has happened to you both since we went away? Well, I declare, such roses on cheeks, and diamonds in eyes! and I protest, Miss Pen has learnt to look straight forward, and is all dimples and smiles! and this too, when, for aught you both knew, I might be dying."

Seymour and I were now too happy not to be disposed to laugh at any absurdity which Ridley uttered; and never before or since did I pass so merry an evening. Seymour was as gay and as delightful as nature intended him to be: you will own that the word "*fascinating*" seemed made on purpose to express him; and I, as he has since told me, appeared to him to exceed in personal appearance that evening (animated as I was with the consciousness of loving and being beloved) all the promise of my early youth; nor could he help saying,

"Really, Helen, I cannot but look at you."

"That is very evident," observed Ridley.

"Yes, but I mean, that I look at her because—because—"

"You cannot help it, and it requires no apology. I have a tendency to the same weakness myself."

"But I mean, you are so surprisingly altered—so grown, so—"

"Say no more, my dear sir," cried Ridley, interrupting him, "for it must mortify the young lady to see how much she has outgrown your knowledge, and your liking! and she is such a disgrace to your family, that it is a pity there is no chance for her changing *her name*, poor thing! those blear eyes must prevent that; I see very clearly, indeed, she is likely to die *Helen Pendarves*."

This observation, much to Ridley's sorrow, evidently clouded over the brows of us both; for we both thought of my mother, and *I* of poor De Walden. But the cloud soon passed away; for we were together, we were assured of each other's love, and *we were happy*.—Nor did we hear the watchman call "past one o'clock," without as much surprise as pain. However, Pendarves walked home with me,

and that walk was not less interesting than the evening had been.

But, alas! my mother's image awaited me on my pillow. I could not help mourning over the blighted hopes of De Walden, nor could I drive from my startled fancy the suspicion that I had committed a breach of duty in receiving and returning vows unsanctioned by her permission, or satisfy my conscience that I had done right in allowing him to call on me the next day. But I quieted myself by resolving that I would instantly write to my mother, tell her what had passed, and see Seymour only that once, till she gave me her permission to see him more frequently.

He came at eleven, and I told him what I meant to do. He fully approved, but declared he would not consent to meet evil more than half way, and give up seeing me. On the contrary, he was resolved

to see me every day till she came; and as Mr. Pendarves our uncle was just come to his house in town, he meant to tell him how we were situated, and he was very sure that he would approve our meeting as much as possible. On leaving me he proceeded to lay his case before our uncle, while I sat down to write to my mother. It was a long letter bathed with my tears; for was I not now pleading almost for life and death? If I loved Pendarves when my affection was not fed by his professions of mutual love, how must that flame be now increased in fervour, when I had heard him plead his cause two days successively, and had enjoyed with him hours of the tenderest uninterrupted intercourse! Wisely had my mother acted in forbidding us to meet, as she wished to annihilate our partiality; for absence and distance are the best preventatives, if not the certain cures of love.

My letter, which was full of passion, regrets, apologies, and pity for De Walden, was scarcely finished, when I was told that a gentleman who was going immediately into Warwickshire, and would pass close by my mother's door, would take charge of it. I foolishly confided it to his care; I say "foolishly," because the post was a surer conveyance. However, I could not foresee that this gentleman would fall ill on the road; that he would not deliver my packet till ten days after it was written; and that I was therefore allowed to spend many hours with Pendarves unprohibited; for my uncle approved our meeting, and desired our union, declaring that he had always thought my mother severe in her judgement of his nephew, and that while considering the fancied interests of her own child, she had disregarded his.

Besides," added he, "I am the head of

the family, and I command you to meet as often, and to love as much, as ever you choose."

Alas! I obeyed him only too well, though my judgement was not blinded to the certainty that he had no rights which could invalidate those of my mother; and though I rejoiced at not receiving her command to cease to receive Pendarves, I was beginning to feel uneasy at her silence, when a letter from her reached me, saying, she was on her road to London, where she would arrive that night, and should take up her abode with our friend Mr. Nelson.

Never before had I been parted from my mother, and till I met Pendarves I had longed for her every day during my stay in London; but now, self-reproved and ashamed, I felt that a yet dearer object had acquired possession of my thoughts and wishes, and the once devoted

child dreaded, rather than desired, to be re-united to one of the best of mothers.

She came; and we met again as we had parted, with tears; but the nature of those tears was altered, and neither of us would have liked to analyse the difference.

Long and painful was the conversation we had together that night, before we attempted to sleep. I found my mother fully convinced that there was a necessity for my not marrying De Walden; a necessity of which he was now himself convinced; for she had gone round by Cambridge in order to see him: but she was not equally convinced that there was a necessity for my marrying Pendarves, as all her objections to that marriage remained in the fullest force.

The next morning she opened her heart on the subject to Mrs. Nelson, who was Seymour's warm advocate, and as-

sured her, that if she made proper inquiries she would find that the character of Pendarves was universally spoken of as unexceptionable; and that whatever might have been the errors of *the youth*, they were forgotten by other people in the merits of *the man*.

"Aye! but a mother's heart can't forget them," she exclaimed, "when her child's happiness is at stake;" and she begged to have no private conversation with Seymour till the next day. In consequence she saw him only in a party at my uncle's, where she was struck with the great improvement both of his face and person; for both now wore the appearance of health, and the countenance which when she last surveyed it bore the stamp of sickness and sorrow, now beamed with all the vivacity of youth and hope.

The party was a mixed one of cards

and dancing; and as she gazed on Pendarves when he stood talking to me, he recalled forcibly to her mind the image of my father as she first beheld him in a similar scene four-and-twenty years before.

The next day Seymour obtained the desired interview with my mother. She brought forward his former errors in array against him, his debts, his dissipations, and his love of play; and though she expressed her readiness to believe him reformed, still, as he ingenuously admitted that his improvement was chiefly owing to my influence over him, she could not deem it sufficiently well founded to obviate her objections; and he was still pleading, and she objecting, when Mr. Pendarves insisted on entering. Mrs. Nelson and I accompanied him.

"I tell you what, niece," said he, "you do not use this young man well: you bring up a parcel of old tales, and

dwell upon the naughtiness of them, as if he was the only young man who ever erred. I know all his sins; he has made me his confessor. In the affair to which you allude he was much more to be pitied than censured, and yielded at seventeen to temptations which might have overcome seven-and-thirty. Since then he has distinguished himself at college: he has paid all his old debts, and incurred no new ones; he has steered clear of the quicksands of foreign travel, shielded (as he says) by the hopes of one day possessing Helen, and by the idea that he was the object of her love; and what would you have more? Besides, Helen tells me he once saved her life."

"I did so," cried Seymour, eagerly seizing her hands, "I did so, and you promised to be for ever grateful!"

"How was it, my dear nephew?"

"*I* will tell you, sir," cried I, gather-

ing hope from my mother's agitation. "It was at the Isle of Wight soon after we came to England: he and I were playing on the shore, and I, not knowing the tide was coming in, paddled across a run of water to what I called a pretty little island, and there amused myself with picking up sea-weed, when the sea flowed in, and he saw that I must perish; no one was near us. Luckily he spied a boat on the dry land, which with all his boyish strength he pushed off to my assistance, and jumped into it. In one minute more it floated towards me, just as my cries had reached the ear of my mother, who was reading on the rock, and who now saw my situation."

"Helen, Helen!" cried my mother, "I can't bear it; the scene was too horrible to recall." But I persevered.

"Seymour seized my hand just as I was sinking, and dragged me into the boat; but in another moment the waves

came swelling round us, and, without oar or help, I and my preserver were both tossed to and fro upon the ocean."

"Helen!" cried Seymour, with great feeling, and clasping me fondly to his heart, "I could almost wish we then had died, for then we should have died together."

"Go on," said my uncle; "I hope you will live together yet."

"I have not much more to tell, except that my mother's screams had now procured assistance, and a boat was sent out to follow our uncertain course. When we were overtaken, they found Seymour holding me on his lap and crying over me in agony unutterable, for he thought that I was dead, and he had come too late. Who can paint my mother's transports when she received me safe and living in her arms?"

"And how she embraced me, Helen," cried Seymour, "and called me her no-

ble boy, the preserver of her child (for she saw all I had done), and how she owned she should ever love me as her own child; and vowed her gratitude should end but with her life!"

"It never *will* end but with my life," cried my mother, now throwing herself on Seymour's neck. "But, is your having saved my child's life an argument for my authorizing you to risk the happiness of that life?"

"Julia, Julia, I am *ashamed* of you," cried my uncle. "Was there ever a better or more devoted wife than yourself? Yet, what did you do at Helen's age? You ran away from your parents, out of an ungovernable passion for a handsome young man."

"But is my error an excuse or justification of his?"

"No; but you are a proof that error

can be atoned for, and never repeated, as you have been a model for wives and mothers. But beware, Mrs. Pendarves, of carrying things too far: beware lest you tempt Helen and Seymour to copy your example, rather than conform to your precepts."

"Ha!" cried my mother, clasping her hands in agony.

"Now then," said Seymour with every symptom of deep emotion, "the moment is come when I am authorized to obey the commands of the beloved dead, and fulfil the last injunctions of my mother."

A pause which no one seemed inclined to break followed this unexpected observation; and Seymour, taking a letter from his bosom, kissed it, and presented it to my mother.

"'Tis Helen's hand," cried she.

"And her seal, *too*, you observe," said

Seymour: "the *envelope*, you perceive is addressed to me, and I have therefore broken it. The other is entire."

My mother read the *envelope* to herself, and these were its contents:—

"My conscience reproaches me, my beloved son, with having too lightly surrendered your rights, and probably your wishes, in giving my friend back her promise to promote your union with her daughter, as I know Julia's ability to act up to her strict sense of a mother's duty, even at the expense of her own happiness, and risk of her child's safety. But I have given up that promise, which might have pleaded for you, my poor child, when I was no more, and ensured to you opportunities of securing Helen's affections, which may now perhaps be for ever denied to you. However I may be mistaken, therefore, if Helen's affections should ever be

yours, avowedly yours, and her mother still withhold her consent, give her the inclosed letter, and probably the voice of the dead may have more power over her than that of the living.

"For your sake I have thus written with a trembling hand, and with a dying pulse: but value it as a last proof of that affection which can end only with my life. "HELEN PENDARVES."

The letter to my mother was as follows:—

"I speak to you from the grave, my dearest Julia; and in behalf of that child on whom my soul doted while on earth. But this letter will not be given you till he is *assured* he possesses the heart of your daughter, and when, if your consent is denied to their union, nothing but an act of disobedience can make them happy in

each other. Are you prepared, Julia, to expose them to such a risk, and thus tempt the child you love, to the crime of disobedience? that crime which, though perhaps it dwelt but lightly on your mind, weighed upon mine through the whole of my existence, as it helped to plunge my mother in an untimely tomb! Perhaps you flatter yourself, that Helen's education has fortified her against indulging her passion at the expense of her duty. But remember that your precepts are forcibly counteracted by your example.

"Anxious however as I am that Helen should not err, I am still more anxious that my son should not lead her into error, as I feel that he is doubly armed against her filial piety by the example of her mother and his own.

"And must my crime be thus perpetuated by those whom I hold most dear? must the misery of *my* life be re-

newed perhaps in that of her whom I have loved as my own child? and must my son be the cause of wretchedness to the dearest of my friends, through the medium of her daughter?

"Forbid it, Heaven! I conjure you, my beloved Julia, by our past love, by *tanta fede, e si dolce memorie, e si lungo costume*, listen to this my warning, my supplicating voice; and let your consent give dignity and happiness to the union of our children.

"HELEN PENDARVES."

My mother after having read this letter covered her face with her hands, and rushed out of the room. It was in a state of anxious suspense that we awaited her return: when she appeared, her eyes were swelled, but her countenance was calm, her look resigned, and her deportment, as usual, dignified. Her assumed compo-

sure, however, failed again when her eyes met those of Pendarves.

"My son!" cried she, opening her arms to him, into which Seymour threw himself as much affected as she was: then beckoning me to her, she put my hand in his, and prayed God to bless our union.

Little of this part of my life remains to be told. My mother had given her consent, and in two months from that period we were MARRIED.

Here ends my narrative of a WOMAN'S LOVE. When next I treat of it, it will be as united to a WIFE'S DUTY.

END OF VOL. II.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe-lane, London.

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